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North Carolina's electric cooperatives provide reliable, safe and affordable electric service to 850,000 homes, farms and businesses in North Carolina. The 27 electric cooperatives are each member-owned, not-for-profit and overseen by a board of directors elected by the membership.

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NEW & IMPROVED HOME ENERGY

Yes, energy prices are rising. What can we do? First, let's see where we can slow down our consumption. Then, let's look at what's here to help and what's down the line. This month, we've collected some news about how to improve your home energy bottom line and the use of new energy sources. Touchstone Energy cooperatives are on your side.

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ON THE COVER

Mackie Hagaman and her husband, Harvard Ayers, generate electricity from the sun at their Boone residence and sell some to their Touchstone Energy cooperative, Blue Ridge Electric. See page 15. (Photography by Frederica Georgia)



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Energy independence: a slow train coming



By Richard G. Biever

There's a Bob Dylan song that goes:

*"All that foreign oil
controlling American soil,
Look around you,
it's just bound to make you embarrassed
Sheiks walkin' around like kings ...
Deciding America's future from Amsterdam and to Paris
And there's a slow, slow train comin' up around the bend."*

Slow train, indeed! Dylan wrote that song some 27 years ago during the second energy crisis of the 1970s. If the slow train was our day of reckoning, the day Americans would finally wake up to our dependency on foreign fuels and forever change our wasteful ways, we're still waiting.

Over the past 30 years we've done little to lessen our dependency on foreign fuels. The United States consumes about 25 percent of the world's energy but has only 3 percent of the world's natural gas reserves and only 4 percent of the world's petroleum.

Some say the price spikes in both natural gas and gasoline we've already seen the past few years are just the tip of the iceberg. The world's demand for oil and natural gas only continues to grow, and the reserves of both, by some estimates, could be gone in 50 years. That means our nation must wean itself from both, seek alternatives and do it now.

President Bush, in January's State of the Union address, acknowledged as much when he said our nation is "addicted to oil." Many welcomed the admission. They said this is the jolt we've long needed. But the only revelation possibly less revealing would be a personal admission of steroid abuse by baseball's Barry Bonds. Apparently we Americans, to paraphrase another Dylan song, really do need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows.

Doug Rye, a straight-talking home energy-efficiency guru, probably said it best: "I'm sick of buying energy from people who hate us." Rye told a group at a seminar here in Indiana, "Our country needs to wake up."

Sheldon C. Petersen, governor and CEO of the cooperatives' finance corporation, told the nation's electric co-op leaders in Orlando in February that nothing is more impor-

tant to our national security than our energy independence from foreign natural gas and oil. Petersen said clean coal technologies, nuclear power and renewable resources offer obvious options to diversify our nation's energy portfolio.

As Americans turn away from foreign fuels, however, Petersen cautioned that Americans may have to pay more for U.S.-produced energy. But he said we should be willing to pay this price if it frees us from our dangerous dependency on unstable Middle East governments.


Glenn English, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, has touted renewable energy, like biofuels made with soybeans and corn, that could help rejuvenate America's heartland. But he's noted renewable

energy must be consumer-friendly, reliable and priced competitively. "The spotlight is on agriculture and rural communities," English said at a renewable energy conference last month. "But ... Washington must share our vision ... and provide equal access to federal incentives."

Even as we develop new technologies for coal and new energy sources, conservation must continue to help ease our nation's gluttonous appetite for all fuels. And

certainly much progress has been made. Kateri Callahan, executive director of the Alliance to Save Energy, pointed out to co-op leaders in February that our nation's greatest source of new energy over the past 30 years has, in fact, been the energy we've saved through conservation. She said the U.S. would need 40 percent more energy than it's using today if not for the saving measures put in place beginning in the 1970s.

But there's so much more we can do. And it must start with each of us at home. Switch to energy-efficient compact fluorescent lights. Replace the old inefficient gas furnace and water heater with high-efficiency electric ones. Caulk against air leaks. Buy Energy Star-qualified appliances.

We, as consumers, have the power to make a difference. So when that slow train to energy independence that's been building steam finally arrives at the station, we—as a nation—will be ready to hop aboard. 

Richard G. Biever is senior editor of Electric Consumer, Indiana's electric cooperative publication.

**The Alliance to Save Energy
points out that our nation's
greatest source of new energy
over the past 30 years has, in
fact, been the energy we've
saved through conservation.**

Talented Tideland photographers



This was one of many beautiful sunrises over Sparrow's Bay, Beaufort County, that I can see from my deck. It was the morning of March 28.

Jane Boahn, Washington / Tideland Electric



This sunset photo was taken by our 10-year-old daughter, Kendra, in February at her uncle's home near Hamilton, N.C. We were quite impressed and surprised that she had captured this on her own.

Bill & Diane Van Staalduinen, Washington / Tideland Electric

Happy Mama's Day



Our mama went through hard times as a child. No parents. Her mama died. Her daddy gave her away. She married young to a loving guy who she lived with for 54½ years before he died. They had nine children together. She made a vow never to walk out on her kids no matter how poor she became. She lost a daughter to cancer. She has a bad heart, diabetes, crippling arthritis and has battled colon cancer. Here she is, Elizabeth Madeline Penny, at age 77. I love my mama with all my heart.

*Letha Mae Humphrey, Snow Hill
Pitt & Greene EMC*

Still here for the holidays



My neighbor, Becky Wilkie, of Robert's Chapel Road in Goldston, asked me to take this picture of her poinsettia during Christmas 2005. She brought this plant in during November, placed it in her sunroom, gave it water and enjoyed it. It was still at its peak as Easter approached. Becky is an elegant country lady with a beautiful home.

Marsha K. Wilson, Goldston

Corrections

The heat pump photograph shown in the "Energy Cents" page in the March magazine was misidentified as a geothermal heat pump when in fact it is the more typical air source heat pump. Sorry.

In April's "Carolina Country Adventures" section, we reported that there are two bottled water businesses in Oakboro. In fact there is just one that has two storefronts—R&G Water—and we misspelled the name. Also, Oakboro's Fountain Grill is in what was once Pike's Drug Store, not Punk's. Sorry.

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Homemaker Invents A Shine That Lasts

Miracle Polish Ends Struggle With Tarnishing Metals. By D.H. Wagner

Lately, I have noticed quite a few newspapers and magazines praising a polish formulated by a homemaker. The articles report that Donna Maas grew frustrated with rubbing and scrubbing her silver, brass and other metals only to see them quickly become dull and tarnished again. Determined to put an end to her constant battle with tarnish, Donna formulated a metal cleaner and it's transforming the industry.

Anita Gold, nationally syndicated columnist and expert on the restoration of antiques calls MAAS (named after its inventor) "The best and most amazing polish in the world." Ms. Gold wrote in her column, "A truly miraculous polish referred to as 'miracle polish' that'll turn the most disastrous pieces into the most de-bright-ful is MAAS Fine Polishing Creme For All Metals, which cleans, restores, preserves and polishes to perfection any brass, copper, chrome, silver, stainless steel, aluminum, gold or any other metal with amazing results - no matter how badly stained, spotted, discolored, flood-damaged, weathered, dirty, dingy, drab, or dull they may be."

Since I had an old brass lamp in desperate need of restoration, this journalist decided to put MAAS to the test. The lamp had been stored in the garage and was in far worse condition than I remembered. I was flabbergasted as I watched the polish wipe away layers and years of tarnish. Never have I used anything so easy. The lamp actually looks better than when I purchased it. Better yet, months later it's still glowing!

The polish worked so effortlessly, I decided to refurbish my mother's antique brass and copper cookware. The badly stained pots and pans developed black spots that had been impossible to remove. MAAS wiped away years of built-up residue even from the most discolored pieces. While polishing, I noticed MAAS applying a shine on the stainless steel sink. WOW! The shine is



unbelievable and although I wash dishes every day, the shine keeps-on-shining. And it's no longer covered with ugly water spots, water just rolls off the protective finish and down the drain.

An independent consumer study of 28 metal polishes reports, "MAAS Polishing Creme has no equals in all around polishing performance..." MAAS retained its shine longer than every



polish tested. Good Housekeeping Institute recommends MAAS for restoring heavily tarnished heirlooms stating, "MAAS cleans best and gives lasting results." The Miami Herald says, "Polishing product can renew old silver." The Chicago Tribune headline sums it all up by saying "One Amazing Polish Is The Best At Everything."

How did a homemaker come up with something the industry's experts couldn't? The reporter in me had to find out.

During our interview Donna explained, "I enjoy the warmth that beautifully polished metals add to a home. However, not the hours it took to keep them tarnish free. The harsh cleaners left my hands dry and burning - one instant silver dip smelled so bad I felt sick. When I read the label, I discovered it contained cancer-causing ingredients! That's when I became determined to find a better way to care for the metals in my home."

And that she did. Her formula developed with a chemist friend quickly restores and leaves a deep, rich one-of-a-kind luster beyond anything I've ever seen.

"To my surprise," Donna reveals, "the formula far exceeded my original goal. MAAS restores glass fireplace doors, clouded crystal vases, fiberglass, linoleum even plastic. The restorations were so remarkable everyone suggested that I sell my invention on television."

Donna sent samples of her polish to televised shopping channels and both QVC and Home Shopping Network asked Donna to personally appear on TV to demonstrate her product. 17,000 viewers called during MAAS' debut and encore performances brought a million dollars in record-breaking sales.

Leona Toppel, was about to throw away a brass chandelier. "No amount of elbow grease could shine it up. With very little effort (a big plus since I suffer from arthritis) MAAS made that chandelier look like new. It's been years and to everyone's surprise it's still glowing."

"MAAS outperforms every polish I've tried," Donna beams with satisfaction. "So if you're as tired as I was of cleaning metals just to see tarnish reappear a few weeks later, MAAS it!"

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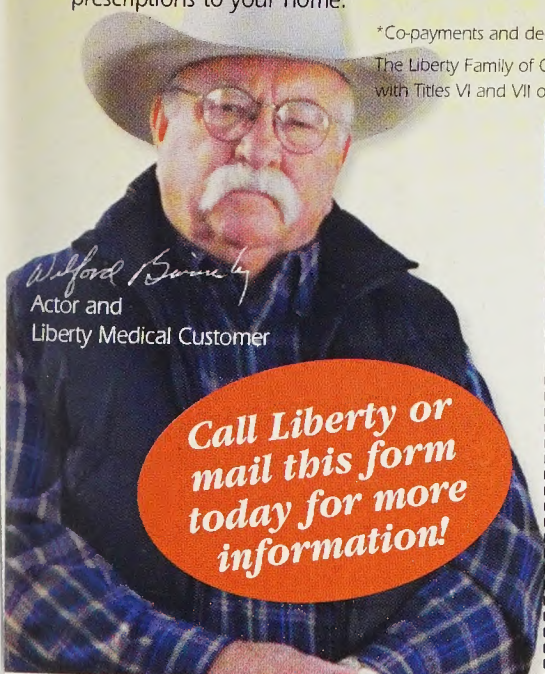
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Cooperatives care for trees and wildlife

Two of North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives recently received recognition for the care they take in managing trees and other vegetation affecting power lines and poles. The cooperatives serve the region between Charlotte and Lumberton which comprises some very rural areas and others affected by suburban expansion.

Union Power's Tree Line USA Award

Union Power Cooperative is the first North Carolina utility to be named a Tree Line USA Utility. The National Arbor Day Foundation, in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters, sponsors the Tree Line USA program to recognize utilities that meet three requirements: a program of quality tree care, annual worker training in quality tree care practices, and a tree planting and public education program.

"Across America, people are recognizing and celebrating how vital trees are to our cities and towns," John Rosenow, president of the National Arbor Day Foundation, said. "Trees help reduce peak demand by conserving energy. They also clean the air and water, increase property value, and make our homes more comfortable, livable places."

Tree Line USA utilities deserve recognition for their commitment to providing safe, efficient service, while helping protect and preserve community trees, Rosenow added. He said Tree Line USA encourages natural pruning instead of the line-clearance practice of topping trees. Natural pruning trains trees to grow around wires and retain more of their natural form. This results in healthier trees and reduced clearance costs for utility companies, since natural pruning has to be done less frequently than topping.

"We feel honored to have achieved this national recognition for our tree care practices," said Tony Herrin, executive vice president and general manager of Union Power. "Good tree care practices are critical for us to deliver the most reliable electric service to our members."

The National Arbor Day Foundation, a nonprofit organization, is dedicated to tree planting and environmental stewardship.

Pee Dee Electric's vegetation program

The Dow AgroSciences industry magazine, Right-of-Way Vistas, recently recognized Pee Dee Electric for its right-of-way vegetation management program. Pee Dee Electric's resource coordinator Garry Veach and his crews are responsible for more than 3,400 miles of distribution line in the seven-county, 20,000-member Pee Dee Electric service territory.


Garry Veach has been with the company for more than 25 years and an arborist for 30 years. He knows a lot about trees, shrubs and vines and their impact on power lines.

Veach and his crews balance the need to access the power lines with not disturbing wildlife habitats.

Veach and his crew foremen Bobby Joe McIntyre and Stan Dean are moving toward a chemical maintenance of the rights of way instead of a mechanical one. "Our upfront cost of applying herbicides may be higher than mowing, but over time these costs level out and we expect to have accessible, biodiverse rights of way," said Veach. "There is

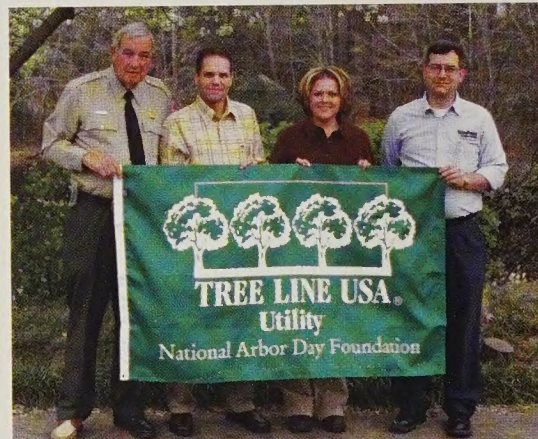
a misconception that spraying is harmful to wildlife habitats, but in fact this type of vegetation management is endorsed by many of the country's environmentalist and wildlife protection organizations like Quail Unlimited."

The overall objective is

to work the rights of way on farms and homes to a point where they can be managed by the property owners and the area can be used for power line-friendly vegetation such as grasses, gardens or wildlife food plots. "When we get there it's a jungle," Veach said. "When we get it under control to where the property owner can find the area useful, it's a win-win situation for everyone." 



Pee Dee Electric at work (left to right): Pee Dee's right-of-way crew foreman Stan Dean, resource coordinator Garry Veach and foreman Bobby Joe McIntyre inspect the vegetation at a right of way site.



Union Power's award (left to right): Stan Adams, state forester with the N.C. Division of Forest Resources; Wil Ortiz, system arborist for Union Power; Carrie Lorenz, assistant arborist and work planner for Union Power; and Wayne Hathcock, manager of Operations at Union Power.

New chief at Halifax EMC

Charles H. Guerry, PE, of Newberry, S.C., assumed the position of executive vice president and general manager of Halifax EMC on Jan. 23.

Guerry replaces Mike Finney, who will serve as an ex-officio officer until his official retirement in May 2006.

Prior to his employment with Halifax EMC, Guerry served as director of Utilities for the City of

Newberry. A graduate of The Citadel in Charleston, S.C., he has 30 years experience in the electric utility industry, including experience in generation and transmission, electrical distribution and municipal utilities. He is also a registered professional engineer.

Guerry and his wife, Frances, are living on Lake Gaston. They plan to relocate to the Halifax EMC area. They have two sons, Russell, 25, and John, 27.

In his spare time, Guerry likes to work with amateur radio operation, and has served as a volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America.

How to seal air leaks in your floor duct system *Como sellar fugas de aire en su sistema de ducto bajo piso*

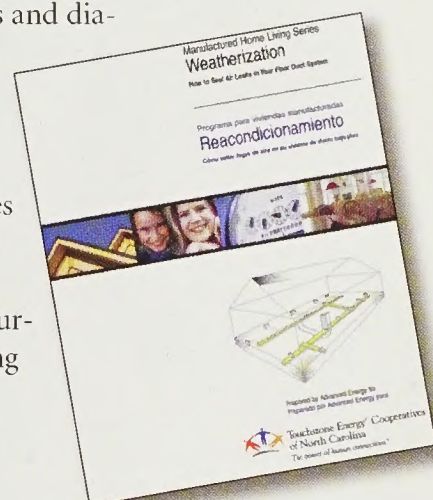
North Carolina's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives and Advanced Energy recently published a step-by-step guide to improving existing duct systems in manufactured or "mobile" homes in order to save energy expenses.

The 24-page guide, published in English and Spanish, covers all aspects of duct systems, materials needed and steps for testing, sealing leaks and repairing the system. There are ample illustrations and dia-

grams as well. The methods apply equally to singlewide and doublewide houses.

The guide points out that "half of manufactured homes built in North Carolina have only minimum required insulation levels and costly furnaces instead of energy saving heat pumps."

To get a free copy, contact your electric cooperative.



WHERE IN CAROLINA COUNTRY IS THIS? →



April Winner:

The scene in the April magazine fooled many of you. The pig is like those seen various places around uptown Lexington, but it is in fact located in front of Southern Bank in downtown Seven Springs, Wayne County, the Tri-County EMC area. Designer Katherine Sasser and artist Martha Kornegay created this pretty-in-pink "Hogs & Kisses" pig. Correct answers were numbered and the \$25 winner chosen at random was Heidi Cox of Seven Springs.

This is a Carolina Country scene in Touchstone Energy territory. If you know where it is, send your answer by May 8 with your name, address, phone number and the name of your electric cooperative.

By e-mail: where@carolinacountry.com

Or by mail: Where in Carolina Country?
P.O. Box 27306
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The winner, chosen at random and announced in our June issue, will receive \$25.



April

Built On Your Land



The Willowbrook

Stick built, the way it's supposed to be.


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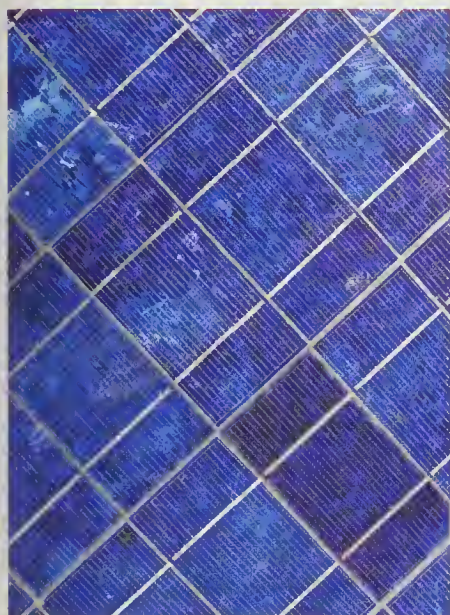
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EQUAL HOUSING
OPPORTUNITY 

SOLAR ENERGY IN NORTH CAROLINA

It's getting easier to
soak up the sun in the
Tar Heel State

By Michael E.C. Gery



Solar radiation reaches North Carolina in sufficient amounts to make it practical as a clean energy source. How practical it is, of course, depends on the time of year, the weather conditions on a given day, what obstacles may block the sun at a given location, and the technology available to take advantage of solar energy.

Engineers have calcu-

lated that after it passes through the earth's atmosphere, the solar energy on the ground level (called insolation) in North Carolina, in electric energy terms, averages 4 to 4.5 kilowatt-hours per square meter per day. (The value remains in all regions of the state and is slightly better in summer.) That's about enough to run a clothes dryer and a refrigerator freezer for a year if you had full sun every day.

North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives recently sent staff representatives to a solar energy seminar conducted by Advanced Energy in Raleigh. The cooperatives are one of the utility sponsors of Advanced Energy, a nonprofit energy research and testing corporation formed in 1980. Advanced Energy's Evan Pritchard, a mechanical engineer, led the seminar.

Pritchard said, "By far, the most cost-effective use of solar energy in North Carolina right now is for heating water." A typical solar water heating system for both residential and commercial use can pay for itself in energy savings in about five years, he said. State and federal tax incentives have made installing this technology even more attractive.

Solar water heating systems typically include flat panels that absorb the sun's heat and transfer it to pipes that carry water to a water tank for use throughout a building. The heating systems vary and include passive ones with no moving parts and active ones that integrate an electric pump. Systems can provide 60 percent of a home's hot water, depending on the location of the site and how much water the place requires. Most systems last 15 to 20 years. An active, flat plate solar collector system will cost approximately \$2,500 to \$3,500 installed and produce about 80 to 100 gallons of hot water per day. A passive system will cost about \$1,000 to \$2,000 installed but will have a lower capacity.

If you're interested in researching a system, you are

advised to check with solar resource professionals and installers to examine your site and advise you on the type of system that would suit your location.

Solar Electricity

The technology to convert sunlight to electric energy—called photovoltaic ("light to electricity") technology—has improved markedly in recent years. But the cost to install these systems has kept them from widespread use in the residential market. Pritchard said the cost of an installed photovoltaic (PV) system ranges from \$6,000 to \$10,000 per kilowatt. "Even with tax incentives out there today," Pritchard said, "you're looking at a lifetime payback period for these systems. The reasons people install them usually have to do with a desire to supply energy with minimal environmental effects, or because the application is in a remote location."

Examples of remote location applications are on-site signage and water pumps for livestock where there may be no convenient tie into the local electric utility system.

Installing a PV system to supply electricity to a building requires a storage capacity, typically a bank of batteries, as well as an inversion technology to convert the DC power generated to AC power for common appliances. The generating devices are an array of flat panels sited to take advantage of the most solar gain during the day; some panels can move during the day to follow the sun's path.

Putting into perspective the power of a PV system, Pritchard said you would need three panels of the 15-volt systems available at Sam's Club to power a typical laptop computer. See an example of a PV installation on page 15.

The North Carolina Solar Center

During the past 20 years, the North Carolina Solar Center has become one of the nation's leading institutions for information about solar and other renewable energy. Located at North Carolina State University, the N.C. Solar Center maintains a database of information about the various financial incentives available for homeowners and businesses who install solar energy systems, as well as basic information on solar energy and system professionals and contractors. The center also maintains the North Carolina Solar House, which allows the general public to see a variety of solar energy applications at work in a typical residential setting. ☺

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SUN

How solar energy
can heat your
house and water

By Deborah R. Huso

Sunshine feels good anytime, but it's especially nice when it offsets your home heating and cooling expense. While many of us may associate solar energy with high-cost photovoltaic systems, passive solar energy systems take advantage of the sun's energy through design, site placement and thermal mass.

While it's easier to take advantage of passive solar energy in new construction, homeowners can also use some of its concepts in existing homes. Leigh Seddon, president of Solar Works, Inc., in Montpelier, Vt., says the first thing homeowners should consider is the building envelope. Good insulation and good insulating glass are important for holding in the heat gained by the sun. The second key, he says, is the orientation of the home. The long axis of the home should face south and have many windows to take in the warmth of the sun on winter days. And thirdly, homeowners should build in a storage capacity for the sun's natural warmth by tiling floors or even building on a south-facing sunroom. "You can reduce energy consumption by up to 30 percent by building a passive solar home," Seddon says.

Francis Wessel of Goochland County, Va., uses lots of south-facing glass on his home as well as tile floors to draw in and store heat in winter. Ken Schaal, owner of Commonwealth Solar in Ashland, Va., says the Wessels can enjoy 70-degree warmth in their home on a winter day with exterior temperatures in the 40s just by taking advantage of passive solar gain without any auxiliary heat running.

But even if you're living in a house that doesn't meet the site orientation or design that's ideal for solar gain in the wintertime, you can still make some small, low-cost adjustments to your home to take advantage of solar energy. "The placement of trees, for example, can make a big difference," notes Schaal. The south side of a home should have minimal coverage from trees, while trees can be beneficial on the west side of the home by cutting down on heat gain in the summer.

Another option for shading your home from sun in summer are solar screens, which are relatively inexpensive but can cut down significantly on the sun's infiltration through windows. Even standard window shades will help as long as they're white and, therefore, reflect light. In winter, you can

reduce heat loss by using window quilts on a track system, which can provide an insulating benefit as good as many double-paned insulated windows, according to Schaal.

"If you have a well-insulated, high-mass house, even a heat pump can do pretty well," he adds, not-



Francis Wessel of Goochland County, Va., uses lots of south-facing glass on his home as well as tile floors to draw in and store heat in winter.

ing that homeowners need to pay attention to air infiltration. An often-overlooked area is the crawlspace, which, if vented and uninsulated, can lead to cold floors and major heat loss.

Seddon says other commonly overlooked areas of heat gain in summer and air infiltration in winter are old or poorly installed skylights and recessed lights. Big skylights can let in a lot of heat in summer; and often, recessed lights lack insulation and can let in cold air from roof and attic spaces.

Even a home that wasn't designed to take advantage of southern exposure can benefit from a well-placed sunroom on the home's south side that will draw in a lot of natural heat in winter. Seddon says installing tile floors over concrete will create a storage area for the heat to preserve its warming effect even once the sun has gone down.

Homeowners can use the sun to decrease energy costs even more by installing a solar water heater. The water heater works by having active solar collectors on the roof with a metal plate under glass that helps heat water. While a solar water heater can cost anywhere from \$4,000 to \$7,000, long-term savings can be substantial. "Hot water is the second-highest energy consumer in a home after the HVAC system," notes Seddon. North Carolina offers tax credits to homeowners who install solar water heaters, thus minimizing the initial financial outlay.

However you try to beat rising energy costs, remember that the home functions best when all of its parts are working together. That means preserving the benefits of an efficient HVAC system by closing up air gaps, insulating properly, installing energy efficient windows, or sealing leaks around those already installed. It also means taking advantage of natural warmth when it's available and the natural cooling effect of shade through roof overhangs and trees. **B**

Deborah R. Huso is a freelance writer based in Highland County, Va.

TO LEARN MORE

North Carolina Solar Center
Box 7401

North Carolina State University
Raleigh, NC 27695-7401

Phone: (919) 515-5666 or (800)
33-NCSUN (Toll-free in N.C.)

E-mail: ncsun@ncsu.edu

Web: www.ncsc.ncsu.edu

EARTH

How geothermal energy can heat and cool your house

By Deborah R. Huso

More than a few homeowners are disgruntled about fuel and energy bills that have nearly doubled in the course of the last year. But there is a way to heat (and cool) a house without using any fuel source at all and minimal electricity—by tapping into geothermal energy.

"When you say geothermal, some people think you're talking about drilling wells in Alaska," says Al Midgett, eastern region manager for Water Furnace International, which manufactures and sells ground-source heat pumps. "But what you're doing is using the earth to heat and cool your home."

Unlike a conventional heat pump, which draws on outside air for heating and cooling, a geothermal system draws warmth from below the ground's surface, via vertical or horizontal pipes that circulate water or environmentally safe antifreeze through a loop under the ground or submerged in a pond. "There's more energy in the ground," says Midgett, "than a house can ever use." In summer, the system pulls warm air out of the home and puts it back into the ground.

Midgett says it wasn't long ago that ground-source heating and cooling existed on the fringe of HVAC systems. "But since the cost of fossil fuels has gone through the roof, we're having record sales." And no small wonder. Homeowners with a geothermal heat pump can expect cost savings of 40 to 60 percent on their utility bills compared with a conventional heat pump. Midgett says heating a home can be four times cheaper for a homeowner who replaces an oil furnace with a geothermal system. "We're now even more efficient than natural gas," he adds.

There's more energy in the ground than a house can ever use.

—Al Midgett.
Water Furnace International

TO LEARN MORE

Geothermal Heat Pump Consortium
1050 Connecticut Ave., NW
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20036
www.geoexchange.org

While Midgett says geothermal systems have been installed mainly in new construction in the past, more and more homeowners are retrofitting existing ductwork to accommodate geothermal. He says a geothermal system is usually about a third more expensive than other standard heating and cooling systems, mainly because of the cost


involved in putting loops into the ground. But you don't have to live on a farm or own a pond in order to take advantage of geothermal heating and cooling. Vertical loops enable homeowners to install such a system, even on small lots.

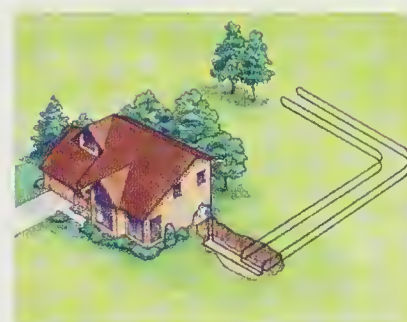
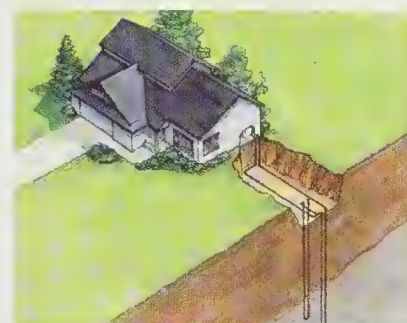
The recently enacted federal Energy Policy Act contains tax credit incentives for both residential and non-residential installation of geothermal systems.

Midgett says Water Furnace offers homeowners the option of 50-year warranties on its loop systems, as well. While a geothermal unit costs more to install, "where we

win is in lifecycle costs," he notes. The system will pay for the extra installation cost in five to six years, perhaps less if energy costs continue to rise. Furthermore, you don't need to turn back the thermostat to increase cost savings. A geothermal system actually works most efficiently when the temperature in the home remains consistent.

Midgett advises against jumping on the geothermal bandwagon without analyzing your home's current status in terms of air leakage and insulation. "Your house needs to be part of the system," he explains. "All the money you spend to heat your home can go right out the window if you have leaks and lack proper insulation."

When you're looking for a contractor to install a geothermal system, Midgett advises, find somebody who not only knows the equipment but who understands heat loss and gain. It's also important to find a technician willing to spend time educating you about how to run a geothermal system efficiently and how to establish different zones in your home for heating and cooling that will ensure efficient and customized comfort through the year. "The better you understand how the system works," notes Midgett, "the better it will work for you." 



A geothermal system draws warmth from below the ground's surface, via vertical or horizontal pipes that circulate water or environmentally safe antifreeze through a loop under the ground or submerged in a pond.

CONCRETE HOUSE

They say it uses less energy to heat and cool, plus withstands 130 mph winds

By Chris Powell

When David Goss decided to retire to Hertford, Perquimans County, the idea of a concrete house had pretty much hardened in his mind.

He was looking for a way to build the most energy efficient house possible. The former civil engineer researched a number of alternatives before ultimately deciding that he wanted a house made of concrete.

"When we started looking at possibilities a couple of years back," Goss said, "we decided we wanted to build a green home. We started to do research on the building technologies, and we came across the insulated concrete form concept."

The insulated concrete form, called ICF by builders, utilizes foam forms that are reinforced with steel rods.

Concrete is then pumped into the forms creating the foundation and walls of the house. The foam forms are left in place giving the walls an R-value of between 30 and 50, as compared to an R-value of 10 to 17 for a typical wood-framed house.

Because the walls are so well insulated, Goss' 3,600-square-foot house can be more than adequately heated with the smallest heat pumps on the market. In fact, he said, houses such as his have been entirely heated with central fireplaces. Then there is also the added benefit of having a house on the coast that is extraordinarily strong. American PolySteel, which manufactured the forms for Goss' house, states that its walls will withstand winds as high as 130 mph. In addition, the company claims the walls have a four-hour fire rating, are termite resistant, reduce outside noise pollution and are bulletproof.

"When we were researching various building techniques,

Hurricane Isabel hit here and then we thought it wasn't a bad idea as a more hurricane-resistant structure," Goss said.

The house is on the Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation system.

TO LEARN MORE

Insulating Concrete Forms Association
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Web: www.forms.org



David Goss says it's not just the energy efficiency. "We are trying to be better environmental stewards."

The company claims the walls have a four-hour fire rating, are termite resistant, reduce outside noise pollution and are bulletproof.

Electrical systems and most plumbing are installed by embedding the wires and pipes in the foam on the walls, which can easily be cut away using a tool called a hot knife. Once the plumbing and electrical are installed, drywall is hung like any other house.

The construction cost for an ICF house is about 10 to 14 percent more than the traditional stick-frame house. However, that is recouped over the lifetime of the structure. According to American PolySteel, the estimated, annual heating and cooling costs for an average-sized home is less than \$1,200 for an ICF house, whereas it is \$2,400 for a stick-frame house.

But Goss, who plans to move into the house in June, said that the economics of building the house were far less important than the house's environmentally friendly aspect.

"It's not so much the cost that drove us," Goss said. "We are trying to be better environmental stewards."

Chris Powell is public relations director for Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation.

SOLAR ELECTRIC HOUSE

This house in Boone supplies the grid with solar generated electricity

By Jeff Brooks and Renee Whitener

North Carolina's energy supply is a little greener, thanks in part to Boone resident and educator Harvard Ayers and his wife, Mackie Hagaman. The Appalachian State University professor and his wife, who is on the staff of ASU, recently became a supplier of solar energy to the NC GreenPower program, a statewide non-profit program working to develop cleaner, renewable energy options for the state.

The electricity comes from solar photovoltaic panels located on the roof of their home that provide 800 watts of electricity and are emissions-free and generated by sunlight. The energy can be used in their home or added to the statewide electrical grid through an interconnection agreement with their Touchstone Energy cooperative Blue Ridge Electric.

"Harvard and Mackie are our first members to utilize our residential small generation interconnection rate," said Doug Johnson, chief executive officer of Blue Ridge Electric, "and we're pleased NC GreenPower has approved them to be a provider to the statewide renewable energy program." While Blue Ridge sets forth standards for interconnection to ensure safety and power quality, NC GreenPower has full authority to qualify and approve all suppliers to the NC GreenPower program.

The Ayers will receive payments from Blue Ridge Electric for every kilowatt-hour that is sold back to the utility. They will also receive an additional premium from NC GreenPower for each kwh generated. The NC GreenPower premium comes from individuals and businesses across the state who voluntarily elect to make tax-deductible contributions of \$4 or more per month on their utility bill to support renewable energy development in North Carolina. Blue Ridge Electric also participates in this program, allowing members to add on contributions to their monthly bill by signing up online or by calling or coming into their local office. As of early April, 205 Blue Ridge Electric members had signed up for NC GreenPower, and a total of \$24,420 in contributions from these members has been sent by the cooperative to NC GreenPower to help support the development of renewable energy.

TO LEARN MORE

NC GreenPower
909 Capability Drive, Suite 2100
Raleigh, NC 27606-3870
Phone: (919) 716-6398
Toll-free: (866) 533-NCGP
E-mail: info@ncgreenpower.org
Web: www.ncgreenpower.org




Harvard Ayers and his wife installed a photovoltaic system at their house in Boone. On occasion the system sends solar-generated electricity into the utility grid. Shown at left is the indoor equipment needed to store and convert the power.

Together, the utility and NC GreenPower payments will help the Ayers household offset the cost of their system.

"Renewable technologies are often higher in cost than traditional resources

despite their cleaner attributes," said Bob Zickefoose, resource manager for NC GreenPower. "One way we can help individuals interested in developing this technology is by providing a per-kilowatt-hour premium to recover some of their costs. Together, with the payment the supplier receives from their utility, it can make a real difference."

North Carolina also offers substantial tax credits for renewable energy additions and energy saving installations. Coupled with tax credits made available in the new federal energy policy act, savings can help defray a significant portion of the investment in these technologies. And homeowners who utilize solar photovoltaic electricity may also be eligible to receive payments from their electric utility and the NC GreenPower program for any electricity that their installation adds to the state's power supply. 

Jeff Brooks is marketing and communications coordinator with NC GreenPower. Renee Whitener is director of public relations at Blue Ridge Electric.

SUN BLOCK

How to protect your manufactured home from too much heat

Heat from the sun shining through windows and on roofs is a major reason for needing mechanical cooling systems in manufactured or "mobile" homes. The most effective way to reduce solar heat is simply to block it. You can use shade trees, vines and trellises, window films, awnings, sun screens and bright roof coatings.

Shade trees and trellised vines provide the most effective shading. They don't allow the sun's rays to reach the home and they create cool buffer zones outside near the home.

Effective shading can also be gained from reflective roof coatings, window films, interior window treatments, sun screens, awnings, low-e glass and reflective glass.

Reflective roofs and walls

Avoid dark colors for walls and roofs in hot climates, because they absorb too much solar heat. Exterior walls and roofs should be reflective to reflect unwanted solar heat.

If repainting exterior walls, choose white or light colors.

When you re-roof your home, choose a reflective roofing or roof coating. The most common reflective coatings are asphalt-based, mixed with aluminum particles and mineral fibers. They reflect about 60 percent of solar heat hitting the roof. These reasonably-priced asphalt coatings vary in quality, mainly due to amount of aluminum particles in each five-gallon container. The better, more expensive coatings contain more aluminum and are more reflective. Stir this asphalt/aluminum coating often during its application.

Bright white latex rubber coatings reflect up to 75 percent of solar heat. These latex coatings are more dependent on proper surface preparation than asphalt coatings. The roof surface must be clean and dry before application. Some latex coatings require a primer coat.

Most large hardware stores and lumber yards carry both asphalt and latex roof coatings.

Interior window treatments

Interior window treatments with reflective surfaces—either metalized or bright white—can block solar heat effectively. Opaque roller shades with white surfaces facing the exterior

repel about 80 percent of the solar heat entering the window. These roller shades block most of the light and all the view.

White Venetian blinds and white slim shades (a smaller-scale Venetian blind) repel 40 to 60 percent of the solar heat entering the window, but also tend to block most of the light and view.

TO LEARN MORE

Excerpted from "Your Mobile Home: Energy and Repair Guide for Manufactured Housing," by John Krigger, Saturn Resource Management. 224 pages, \$19.95 for print version or \$16.95 for the CD.

Phone: (800) 735-0577
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Window film can block 50 to 75 percent of solar heat transmitted through single-pane glass. Left pane shows "spectrally selective" film that does not change the appearance of the glass and allows a normal view and interior light. Right pane contains no film.

To retain some light or view, install roller shades made with metalized plastic window film. Like reflective films applied to glass, these metalized plastic roller shades can preserve the view and transmit some light, while blocking the heat.

Reflective window films

Metalized plastic window films (similar to those applied to automotive windows) can block 50 to 75 percent of the solar heat transmitted by single-pane glass.


A microscopic layer of metal on these films reflects solar radiation. Installed on the interior side of single-pane glass, reflective window films repel solar heat, cut glare and reduce fading. The most effective films look like a mirror when viewed from outdoors during the daytime. Tinted films that color the glass are not as effective in blocking solar heat.

Because reflective window films block daylight in addition to solar heat, consumer acceptance has been slow. Newer films (sometimes called low-e films) recently introduced to the marketplace transmit more light while blocking most of the heat. These low-e films also reflect heat back into the home in winter.

Window films may be installed for \$3 per square foot or less. Installing reflective window film is a moderately difficult do-it yourself project. These films—manufactured with removable protective layers—require careful placement and are very sensitive to dirt.

Unlike sun screens, reflective window films do not obstruct the operation of any kind of window.

Window films are probably the best shading method for unshaded sliding glass doors. Window films also work well for outwardly opening windows that wouldn't open if you installed an exterior sun screen.

Lower-quality window films may get cloudy or deteriorate because of intense sunlight, harsh cleaning fluids, or abrasion from cleaning by rough towels. 

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START RIGHT

The ingredients
of an energy-
efficient house

By Arnie Katz

Getting an energy-efficient house is really a question of doing a few things very well: 1) build it tight; 2) insulate it right; 3) orient it for sunlight; 4) correctly install efficient equipment, and 5) install proper ventilation.

To build the house tight, you need a continuous, durable air barrier surrounding the living space. There are a number of ways to do this effectively, such as sealing the drywall, sealing a poly vapor barrier, caulking everything in sight, or using a house wrap product. Each of these can be effective if done correctly. Unfortunately, none of them are typically done correctly. House wraps as normally installed, for instance, are probably of little use.

Some of the tightest houses I've tested have been built by Habitat for Humanity. This is partly due to the care that Habitat volunteers take, and partly due to the simplicity of the houses. The more complicated a house becomes with dormers, cantilevered floors, knee walls, open-web floor trusses, split-levels, and chimneys, the more difficult it is to create a continuous air barrier around the living space. Careful attention to details becomes the key. And the only practical way to know whether the detailing has been successful is to test the house with a blower door. I am skeptical of a builder who claims to build energy-efficient houses but doesn't have them tested.

Insulating the house right would seem to be as easy as pulling on your longjohns. Certainly, the level of knowledge about insulation has increased dramatically since the 1970s, and building codes have improved. Unfortunately, most insulation jobs I see include lots of compression, voids and gaps. Insulating houses has become a highly competitive, low-bid-driven industry in which the contractors who price their work based on doing a quality job usually get rewarded by not getting the work.

Unlike the tile floors, the whirlpool tub, or the fireplace, the insulation job is invisible to the buyer, and therefore is often approached in terms of the minimum job necessary to pass inspection. Many building inspectors don't have the time to do a really thorough job or the training to understand the importance of the small details. Beware of a builder who claims to build "energy efficient" houses who doesn't mention that he or she routinely pays extra to get the highest quality insulation job.

The third key to getting a comfortable house with low energy bills is to orient the house to capture a lot of sunlight in the winter and very little in the summer, and to take advantage of prevailing breezes. Put most of the windows on the south side, ideally with overhangs big enough to block the summer sun. Put few windows on the east and west sides, so that the low morning and afternoon summer sun won't enter the house.

Fourth, select high efficiency equipment that is installed correctly.

A study of heat pumps and air conditioners by Advanced Energy found that 85 percent of the units had either too much or too little refrigerant. Other typical problems include over-sizing, mis-matching of indoor and outdoor units, and improper installation of condensation lines. Typical duct systems have almost

seven times as much leakage as we consider reasonable. And equipment is often installed in such a way as to create negative pressures in the house which can cause furnaces, water heaters and fireplaces to backdraft poisonous combustion products into the living space.

A builder who talks about energy efficiency and just mentions a fuel type or a SEER rating probably doesn't understand how often proper installation doesn't happen, which probably means he's not paying enough to make sure it's done right. Beware!

Finally, it's crucial that all this happen in a house with adequate ventilation to control moisture and assure fresh air for people. No one wants to live in an energy-efficient thermos bottle. Adequate ventilation has to be planned and controlled. At the very least, a house should have bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans that exhaust all the way to the outside, and some system for bringing some outside air into the house.

Sloppy construction in the name of letting the house "breathe" simply won't cut it. ☹

Arnie Katz is director of training and senior building science consultant with Advanced Energy in Raleigh. Formed in 1980, Advanced Energy is a nonprofit corporation that focuses on industrial process technologies, motors and drives testing, and applied building science. Its mission is to create economic, environmental and societal benefits through innovative and market-based approaches to energy issues. North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives are one of Advanced Energy's sponsors. For more information, visit www.advancedenergy.org



Greg Brooks, Walton EMC

Insist that your builder uses the highest quality insulation.

SKYLIGHTS

Turn off the lights
and let the sun
shine through

One good way to cut down on energy consumption is by making use of natural light. It is possible to build a home where you don't need to turn the lights on until darkness falls. This can be achieved through strategically placed windows, as well as through use of skylights and sun tunnels, which will provide natural light as well as privacy in bathrooms and in areas that typically don't have windows, such as closets and laundry rooms.

"Skylights admit 30 percent more light than vertical windows in dormers and provide the drama of a sky view that can't be achieved with vertical windows," says VELUX America's product manager Joe Patrick. He also points out that, unlike vertical windows, skylights can add light and ventilation without taking up valuable wall space.

Years ago, skylights were the bane of builders because of leaks and heat infiltration, but Patrick says many manufacturers' skylights today come with high-energy-efficient glass and low-emissivity coatings. "They do a good job of blocking out excess heat in summer and keeping heat in in winter," he notes. "Today's technology minimizes the old problems with skylights."

Many skylight models can be opened and closed by remote control, and some are available with electrochromic glass that can be lightened or darkened via remote to cut solar heat gain down by as much as 80 percent. Others have built-in blinds to control light.

Patrick says skylights are ideal for lighting areas that normally would require electric lighting during the day, such

Skylights are ideal for lighting areas that normally would require electric lighting during the day, such as over stairways or in kitchens and bathrooms.

as over stairways or in kitchens and bathrooms. Skylights that open can even create natural air ventilation in typically warm or humid bathrooms and kitchens.

And even homeowners with small interior laundry rooms, powder



You can place skylights over tubs and showers to make use of natural light when bathing while still maintaining privacy.

rooms, or walk-in closets can take advantage of natural light through the use of sun tunnels. Sun tunnels use a reflective tunnel to bring light from the roof down into interior spaces without windows.

"Using natural light can save on electric costs," Patrick says. Skylights can also provide dramatic architectural effects in bathrooms or in attic rooms with a low roof pitch. VELUX's balcony roof windows, for example, allow homeowners to bring light into a room that falls under the home's roof line while also creating a unique balcony when opened. You can also place skylights over tubs and showers to make use of natural light when bathing while still maintaining privacy.

And, of course, there's the real and positive effect that sunshine has on humans—helping us feel wakeful in the mornings and energetic throughout the day. Fluorescent lighting can save energy, but it probably won't lift your mood like sun pouring in a window. ☺

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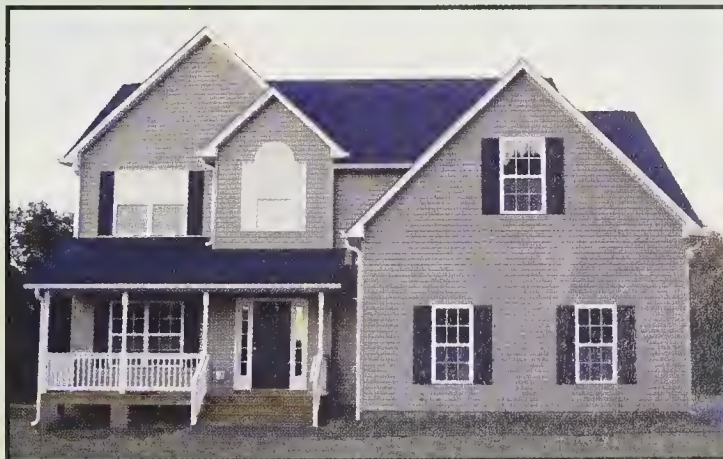
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The Ugliest Lamp *you ever saw*

HER ELVIS PRESLEY LAMP

It sits on our nightstand and seems to be looking at me as I turn off the light. There it is when I open my eyes in the morning, an Elvis Presley lamp (**image a**), which belongs to my wife, Phyllis. She has Elvis candles, books, coins, stamps, hats, dolls, a watch and even a lock of his hair. But this lamp is one of her most prized possessions. I think this is the ugliest lamp I ever saw.

Her cousin, Billy Cook, found this unique lamp at a yard sale, and knowing her love for Elvis, he bought it immediately. Billy made her day when he gave it to her.

She invites visitors to our house to see it. She even lugged this monstrosity to work. I think she showed it to her co-workers whether they wanted to see it or not. Maybe Elvis fans envy her, but not me.

I heard her tell someone on the phone that she was washing Elvis' hair. When I looked she was lovingly rubbing a damp cloth over the lamp's head. I believe I am destined to face this lamp the rest of my life. Lucky me.

Donald Grant, Statesville / EnergyUnited

THE BACHELOR'S CHERUBS

I inherited these lamps when I married my husband 15 years ago. His mother gave him a pair of "cherub" lamps (**image b**) when he moved into his first apartment back in 1985. He thought they were cool for his hip bachelor pad. I thought they were hideous. We used them in our first home only because we couldn't afford any new ones. They have long been banished to our basement, but for some strange reason we can't seem to throw them away.

*Rachel & Nick Basile, Waxhaw
Union Power Cooperative*

DRIFTWOOD SPECIAL

Now THIS is an ugly lamp (**image c**).

Elaine Hayes, Somers, Conn. / Cape Hatteras Electric Cooperative

MISS SHAPELY

Did you say ugly? This quite unusual lamp (**image d**) is unsightly, hideous, offensive, physically repulsive and just plain ugly. Although I do like the color, and having a figure like that would be nice. We found this shapely lamp in Cameron and left it there.

My aunt and I go to the Cameron Antique Day every year when they have it spring and fall. By the way, we (my aunt and I) are antiques, too. She is 65 and I am 59.

Jenny McPherson, Liberty

THE SERGEANT'S LAMP

Is this not the ugliest lamp you ever saw (**image e**)?

In 1991, I was transferred from Fort Drum, N.J., to Germany. I had no furniture for my bedroom, so my sergeant said he had some things that he and his wife were going to give away that were in my price range: free. So I told him to bring it on over.

The furniture consisted of a couch and a loveseat and this ugly lamp. The couch and loveseat had one-inch legs, like they have in some kind of bars where you go and lay about and have a drink. I jacked them up with blocks of wood, but I couldn't do anything about this lamp. I don't know why I keep it in my living room, still. I even have people come to my house and ask me, "What is that?" It might be ugly but it sure is a good conversation piece.

Lula K. Grover, Fayetteville / South River EMC



Thanks to everyone who sent in stories and pictures of the ugliest lamp you ever saw. You can see more of the submissions at our Web site. Next month we'll publish stories of "the best summer I ever had," by kids age 16 and younger. (Deadline was April 15.) For more themes and the rules of this series, see page 24.



THE FAMILY HEIRLOOM

I was at my mother's house visiting one day and I noticed a lamp (**image f**) that she had put in her living room. I went on and on about how ugly it was and that she needed to get rid of it in place of a new one. Come to find out it was my great-grandmother's. My mother proceeded to tell me that it was going to be part of my inheritance. Boy, was I disappointed. I guess I'll have an ugly lamp in my living room one day also.

Carla Dennis, Troy / Randolph EMC

QUEEN MUM'S

When I saw the theme "The Ugliest Lamp I Ever Saw,"

I said to myself, "Hands down, I own it!" (**image g**).

At a recent Red

Hatters gathering, we had a "white elephant" gift swap. Everyone was to bring a wrapped gift, preferably a funny one, something you received as a gift and just wished you could give away to someone else. When it was my turn to pick a gift, I chose the biggest one I could find. It was wrapped like a mushroom, and I thought this could be the birdbath that I've been looking for. As I unwrapped it, I couldn't believe my eyes. Everyone

roared with laughter. I got the prize of the evening—no one could top it. Is that any way to treat a queen?

Carolyn Koch ("Queen Mum" of the Red Hot Mamas of Moore County), Aberdeen / Central EMC

A BEAUTY, IF THE LIGHT IS RIGHT

The passing of time hasn't been unkind to her, though she looks a bit tired and shopworn (**image h**). Buried in my basement, away from public view, resides a lamp that is the ugliest of ugly. Even though she may be covered with any matter of discarded items, she peeps out at you wanting attention. She lived well in a time of Art Deco, and might have even been called handsome in her day. She is all that is left of a matching set, a couple, a Barbie and Ken in brief tropical attire. In happier days, she and her mate gazed into a warm living room. I never thought of her being out of place then, but I was only a child and she seemed exotic.

Oh, pity her now. Her world is dark, dusty and damp. I pass by her several times a day, occasionally concerned about her safety. Even though her existence may be bleak, the memory of her in her heyday conjures up pleasant memories for me. If the light is just right, the years drop away and she is transformed into beauty once again, if only for a few fleeting moments.

Hurleen Maffett, Asheboro / Randolph EMC

THE FALLEN LAMP POST

I had not been the pastor at the Fairview Baptist Church in Statesville very long, not even six weeks, when this lamp (**image i**) had its auspicious beginnings. After church services had ended I was the last one to leave, and as I backed out of my usual parking spot I felt a sudden bump. My car stopped and would not start again. I had run over a large white post that occupied the corner of the parking lot. There I sat, with a car that would not start and a large white post totally uprooted, concrete and all.

Several weeks later at a church fellowship, the crowd was hushed. Barbara Setzer, a church member with a great sense of humor, presented me with this ugly lamp. Stripped of its white paint, I suddenly recognized it as "the post"

Barbara had one of the handymen in our church convert the post into a lamp. As I sit and read by the light of this ugly lamp, I am constantly reminded of wonderful friends with a sense of humor and that it is always best to laugh with others, and most of the time at yourself.

Dr. T. Scott Eanes, Statesville / EnergyUnited

ONLY A MUSICIAN WOULD LIKE IT

It all goes back to 9th grade. I played clarinet in the Newark High School band in New York. However, my favorite instrument was piano.



In 12th grade, my dream came true. I was accepted at East Carolina University and was ecstatic that I could attend a reputable music school. Soon, I chose to change my major to Elementary Education. I loved children, and I knew I could apply my musical background to that climate. And I did: I taught kindergarten in Virginia for 30 years and used songs, instruments, etc. in motivating my children to learn.

Then it happened. While I was window-shopping I saw the ugliest lamp ever (**image j**). Someone had turned a clarinet into a lamp.

Today, 30 years later, my family is moving to Lake Gaston. I still have the desire to play piano, but not the clarinet. I dug it out of a closet. It hadn't been played since high school. The clarinet looked good physically, but its workable condition was poor. I went to a lamp shop last summer and had it turned into "my lamp."

It sits in the living room and despite what others think about its looks, I am perfectly content with its uniqueness and good memories. I love it!

Karen Peszko, Portsmouth, Va. / Halifax EMC

THE RUNT OF THE LITTER

My husband and I love to go to local auctions. We've found a lot of interesting and unusual things for a fair price.

One night at auction I spied this odd-looking lamp in the corner (**image k**). The runt of the litter, but I fell in love! Very unique, constructed by somebody's hands, no doubt. A cake pan base with a cheese grater for a trunk, topped with a spaghetti colander as the lampshade. Wow! What a find! I asked the auctioneer's assistant to bring it up front for bidding. My husband, who thought it was hideous ugly, said "You've got to be kidding!" I responded with "It's got character."

I'll admit I was nervous when the bidding started. I thought somebody else would want it and outbid me. Least of my worries! When I heard the auctioneer finally say "Well, won't anybody even give \$5 for this odd-looking lamp?" I held up my card, slightly embarrassed.

But I must admit it looks good in our kitchen, especially on spaghetti night. One man's discard is another man's delight. 🍝

Pia Prince, Tryon



Send us your best Earn \$50

Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we'll send you \$50. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

July 2006

I'll Never Eat That Again

A bad experience with food.

Deadline: May 15

August 2006

How I Almost Flunked

What were you thinking.

Deadline: June 15

September 2006

My Finest Sports Moment

Send pictures, too.

Deadline: July 15

October 2006

My Favorite Halloween Costume

Send the story and photo.

Deadline: August 15

November 2006

My Favorite Photo

North Carolina people or places.

If they are digital: 300 dpi and actual printing size.

Deadline: September 15

December 2006

Regifting Mistakes

I should not have given that away.

Deadline: October 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. One entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay \$50 for each submission published. We retain reprint rights.
8. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't agree to this.)
9. Send to: Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616
Or by e-mail: finer@carolinacountry.com
Or through the Web: www.carolinacountry.com

GREEN

BUILDING PRODUCTS

Minimize or eliminate negative environmental or health impacts

By Deborah R. Huso

Green building isn't just a fringe idea anymore. In fact, making use of green building products—materials that minimize or eliminate negative environmental or health impacts—is not only hitting the mainstream, it's also becoming more cost competitive.

Skip the hype, and take a look at some green building products that really work and won't pinch the pocketbook either:

Quiet, healthy floors with wool

If you're thinking about putting down new floors, you might want to consider what goes under them. Many manufacturers now offer natural wool underlayments for hardwood, engineered and laminate floors. The floors not only insulate to prevent the transmission of sound between floors, but the wool actually absorbs VOCs (volatile organic compounds like formaldehyde), thus helping to clear indoor air. Plus, wool is a renewable resource, as sheep are shorn annually.

Green floors

You can enjoy the beautiful look of hardwood floors without cutting down the rainforest. Bamboo flooring is becoming increasingly popular. It looks like hardwood, but it's actually made from a quickly renewing grass that's tougher than many standard hardwoods, such as maple. Be sure to do your homework on manufacturers, however, and find one that uses water-based, solvent-free adhesives and finishes that won't give off toxic fumes. The best part is that bamboo flooring is generally cheaper than hardwood, too. Another option that's especially good for kitchens and other high-traffic areas is cork flooring. Made from the bark of the cork oak tree, it can be harvested without cutting down the tree, and has a unique soft feel to the feet and will withstand a glass being dropped on it without damage to the glass or the floor because of its resiliency. It costs about the same as hardwood floors but requires less maintenance and is less susceptible to damage from spills and wear.

Quickly renewing kitchens

Floors aren't the only place where you can install quickly renewing wood products these days. Cabinetmakers are also offering kitchens made from sustainably harvested cherry, as well as bamboo. You can even get countertops made from jarrah (a eucalyptus hardwood), recycled glass and granite.




Wood Flooring International



Berkeley Mills

Bamboo flooring looks like hardwood, but it's actually made from a quickly renewing grass that's tougher than many standard hardwoods, such as maple. Cabinetmakers are also offering kitchens made from bamboo (shown) as well as sustainably harvested cherry.

Paint cleaner and greener

If you're getting ready to change the look of a room with a fresh coat of paint, consider using low- or no-VOC paints. Many paints today contain VOCs that help them dry faster, but the trade-off is the release of chemicals that create pollution of ground-level ozone and irritation to homeowners with respiratory problems or allergies. Generally, low- or no-VOC paints cost the same, and sometimes less, than regular paints. Most major paint manufacturers sell them, so be sure to ask when you're in the paint store or read the can label to see the level of VOCs the paint contains. 

Storm Watch

How to prepare your family and property for severe weather

Outside

1. Trim dead or weak branches from surrounding trees. Do not leave them for curbside pickup during a storm watch.

2. Moor boat securely, store it upside down against a wall or move it to a safer place. Remove canvas. Anchor a boat trailer with strong rope.

3. Protect your windows with custom-fit shutters or 5/8-inch plywood. Check with your local building inspector.

4. Keep roof drains clear.

5. If you live in a flood-prone area, elevate or move structures to higher ground.

6. Bring indoors objects that may be blown or swept away, such as lawn furniture, trash cans, children's toys, garden equipment, clotheslines and hanging plants.

7. Lower water level in pool 6 inches. Add extra chlorine. Turn off electricity to pool equipment and wrap up any exposed filter pumps with a waterproof covering.

8. Plan how to take care of your pets. Leave them with a friend. If you must evacuate, it is best to take your pets with you, but most shelters will not allow them. Large animals in barns should have plenty of food and water.

9. If a storm is pending, fuel your vehicle.

10. Keep a smaller Disaster Supplies Kit (see next page) in the trunk of each car.

11. Keep sliding glass doors wedged shut in high wind.

12. If you use a portable generator, make sure you know what loads it can handle, including start-up wattage. If you connect the generator to household circuit, you must have a double-pole, double-throw transfer switch installed between the generator and outside power, or the "back-feed" could seriously harm or kill utility line workers.

13. Take down outdoor antennas, after unplugging televisions.

Inside

14. Store valuables in a waterproof container at the highest point in your home.

15. Make two photocopies of vital documents and keep the originals in a safe deposit box. Keep one copy in a safe place in the house, and give the second copy to someone out-of-town. Vital documents include birth and marriage certificates, tax records, credit card numbers, financial records, wills and trusts.

16. Install smoke alarms on each level of your home, especially near bedrooms. Use the test button to test them once a month. Replace batteries at least once a year.

17. If a family member relies on life-support equipment, make sure your electric cooperative knows ahead of time.

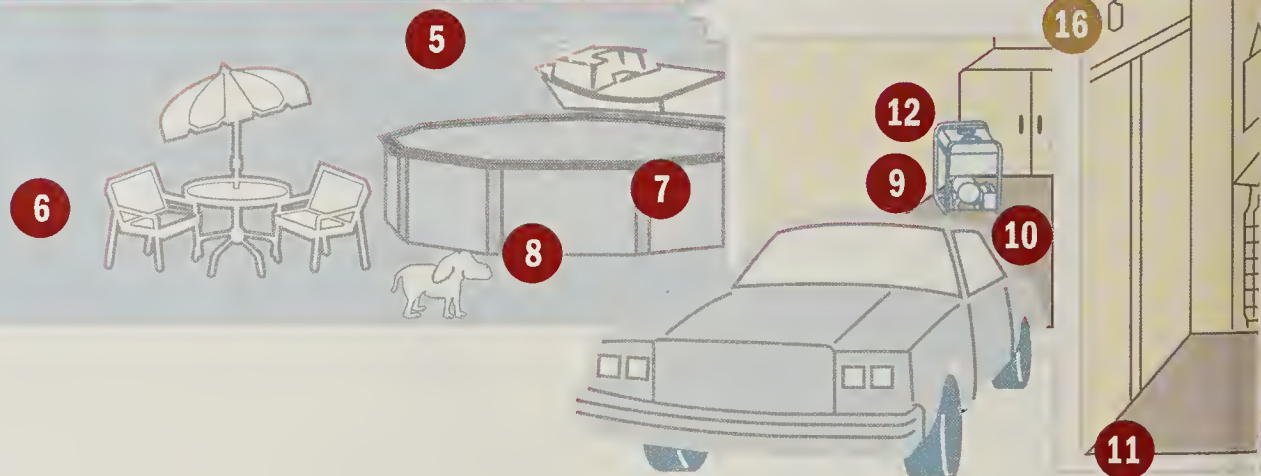
18. Fill bathtubs, sinks, and jugs with clean water in case water becomes contaminated.

19. Pick a "safe" room in the house, usually a first-floor interior hallway, room or closet without windows.

Resource information

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
500 C Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20472
Phone: (800) 621-3362
www.fema.gov

American Red Cross
2025 E Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20006
Phone: (202) 303-4498
www.redcross.org



20. Plan home escape routes. Find two ways out of each room.

21. Check and protect objects that could cause harm during a bad storm: bookshelf, hanging pictures, gas appliances, chemicals.

22. Write and videotape an inventory of your home, garage, and surrounding property. Include information such as serial numbers, make and model numbers, physical descriptions, and price of purchases (receipts, if possible). Store a copy somewhere away from home, such as in a safe deposit box.

23. Keep a portable, battery-operated radio or television and extra batteries.

24. Post emergency telephone numbers.

25. Show adult family members where your fire extinguishers are and how they work.

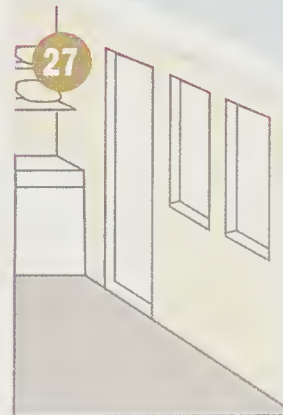
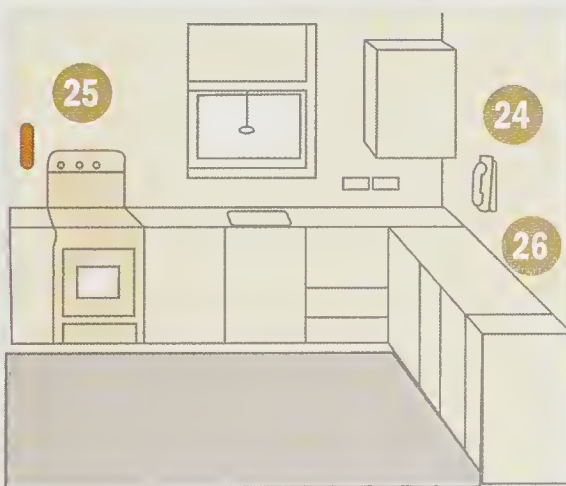
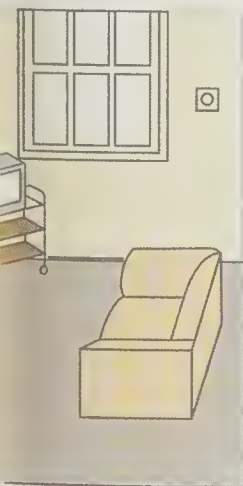
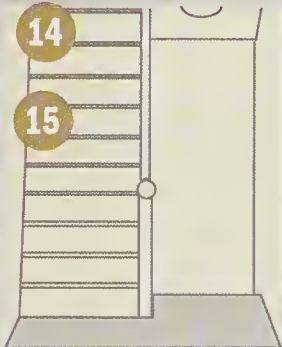
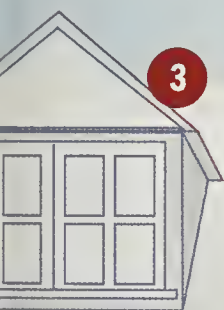
26. Make a plan for family members to reunite if separated (if children are at school and adults are at work). Designate an out-of-state relative or friend as a contact person and make sure everybody in the family knows how to reach the person.

27. Teach all responsible family members how and when to turn off the water, gas, and electricity at the main switches or valves. Keep a wrench near gas and water shut-off valves. Turn off utilities only if you suspect a leak or damaged lines, or if you are instructed to do so by authorities.

A Disaster Supply Kit (recommended by the American Red Cross,

Have enough disaster supplies for 2 weeks ready. Keep items in airtight plastic bags. Replace stored food and water every six months. Rethink your kit and family needs at least once a year. (Replace batteries, update clothes, etc.) Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications.

Emergency food & drinking water	Lantern with extra fuel
At least one change of clothes	Manual can opener
Baby food, diapers & formula	Matches
Batteries	Medicines, glasses or contact lens supplies
Bleach (without lemon or additives)	Mosquito repellent
Books, magazines, cards & games	Personal identification
Butane lighters	Pet food
Cash & credit cards	Phone numbers of places you could go.
Camera & film	Plastic trash bags
Car keys	Radio (battery-operated) or TV
Charcoal & lighter fluid	Rope (100 ft.)
Clock (non-electric)	Sleeping bags, pillows & blankets
Cooler (with ice)	Soap & shampoo
Duct & masking tape	Sturdy shoes
Extension cords	Toilet paper & towelettes
Fire extinguisher	Tool kit including hammer, crowbar, nails, saw, gloves, etc.
First Aid kit	Water purification tablets
Flashlight	
Grill or camp stove	
Heavy plastic	
(for roof if damaged)	



If you must evacuate

leave as quickly as possible. Unplug your appliances, but leave on your refrigerator. Turn off the main water valve. If time allows, move furniture to a higher place. Take sleeping bags, blankets, warm protective clothing, emergency supplies, eating utensils and identification showing proof of residency. Tell somebody where you are going.

FREE-FLO

Catching and recycling rainwater for everyday use

By Jennifer Taylor

Water restrictions, drought conditions and brush fires are plaguing residents in piedmont North Carolina. Watering the garden and washing the car are spring chores most of us look forward to this time of year. As the weather warms up and the days grow longer, it is easy for kids to be drawn to the lawn for a quick run through a cold sprinkler. Unfortunately, these activities are coming to a halt as local officials monitor water consumption and enforce restrictions due to the dry conditions.

Like so many others struggling to keep their lawns green, Mark Urban, a Wake EMC member, decided to find a solution. Tired of water restrictions and relying on city and well water, Urban had an idea that washed the water concerns away—a water recycling system that filters and stores rainwater. After two years of hard work, Urban's recycling concept changed into a design and FREE-FLO underground rainwater catching systems began. Urban is currently installing these unique systems and recently applied for a patent.

How it works

The FREE-FLO system collects rainwater from the roof of a home or structure and funnels the water into an underground storage tank. Rainwater is the main source, but other water sources can also be plumbed to the holding tank. Filters and cleaner boxes are strategically placed throughout the system to keep the water clear and clean. The system has an automatic jet mixer in the storage tank so additives can easily be mixed with the water for fertilizing gardens or lawns. From the tank, a series of pipes direct the water to different locations such as water hoses and spigots.

When it rains, the system is replenished with fresh water. For example, the average home with an irrigation system uses approximately 50 to 80 percent of water for outdoor use. With a 1,700-gallon residential tank, it takes about one inch of rain water to fill the tank for use. If the system uses 100 gallons of water for your lawn and plants a day, the water supply would last for 17 days without any other source. Every time a summer thunderstorm passes through, the tank is refilled.

The benefit of this system is for everyone. If developers installed the systems in subdivisions, millions of gallons of water could be saved. Water from the tanks can be used for washing cars, boats and pets. With proper filters and health inspections, the systems can be used as the primary water source for houses. FREE-FLO does not lose water




through evaporation or attract mosquitoes and insects. The pump and tank are non-freezing and the design does not allow for algae growth.

Commercial use

If you are interested in using this system for commercial purposes, Urban has designed tanks that can meet your needs. Underground fiberglass tanks range in size from 2,000 gallons up to 50,000 gallons and can be installed on golf courses, farms or apartment complexes where mass irrigation is needed. These larger systems have multiple pumping stations, jet mixers and automatic overflow pumps. Above ground tanks are also available with sizes from 4,000 gallons to 20,000 gallons. Larger sizes can be special ordered.

Cost and specifications

Each location will be evaluated to determine the specific cost. For builders, FREE-FLO has prefab kits that include the necessary components and instructions for easy installation. Residential tanks come in four different sizes: 350 gallons, 550 gallons, 1,200 gallons and 1,700 gallons. The FREE-FLO system is guaranteed to be installed correctly.

Urban hopes this system will change the way people look at water conservation. 



A 1,200-gallon residential tank is being installed (above) for use as a secondary water source. The system can be used for gardening, washing cars and watering the lawn. After the underground system is installed, (top) it is quiet and virtually invisible.

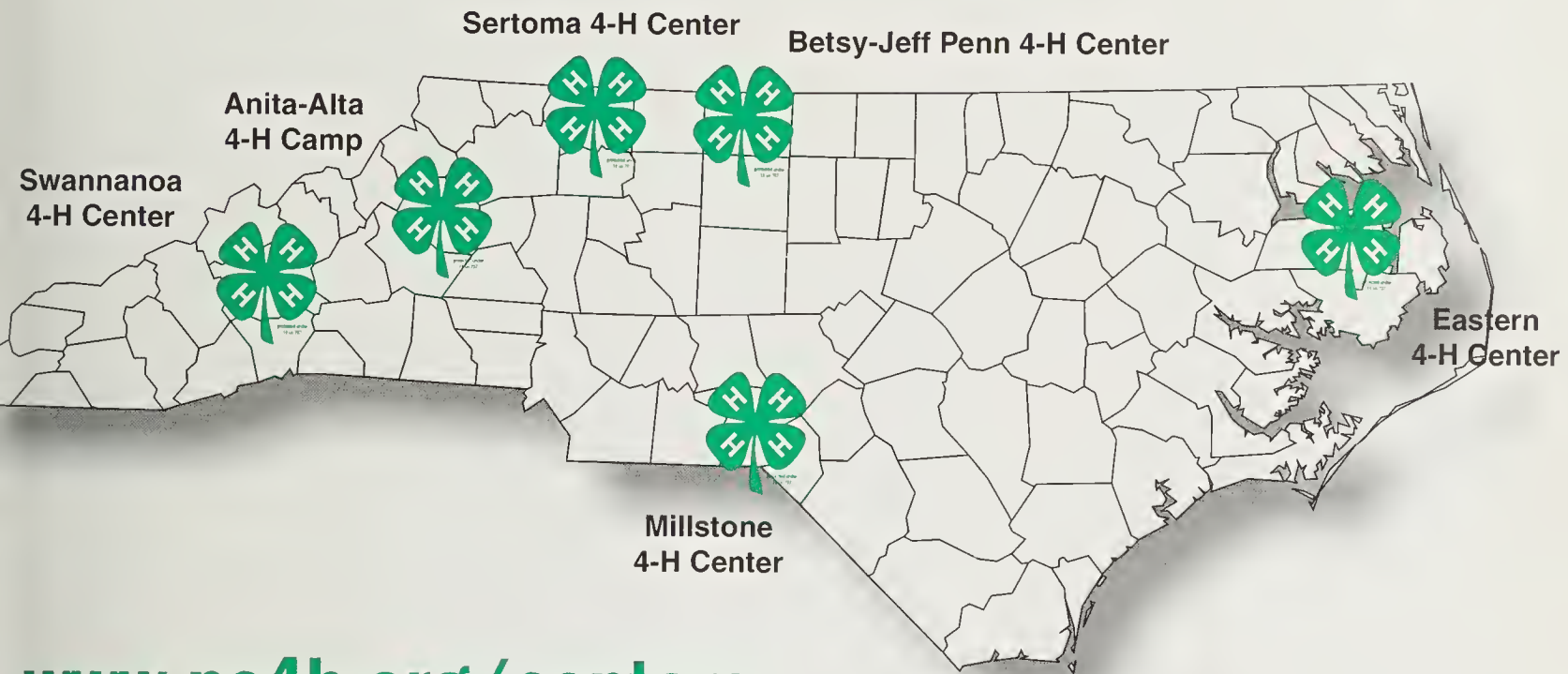
TO LEARN MORE FREE-FLO

(919) 562-7891

(919) 614-3403

www.freeflowater.com

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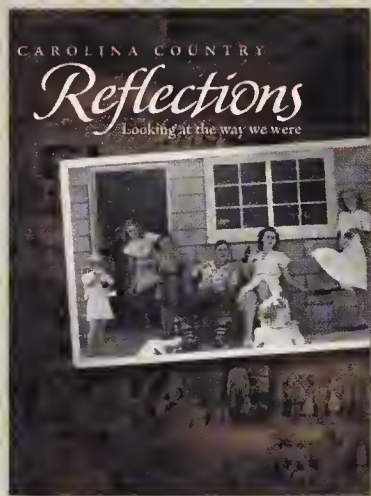


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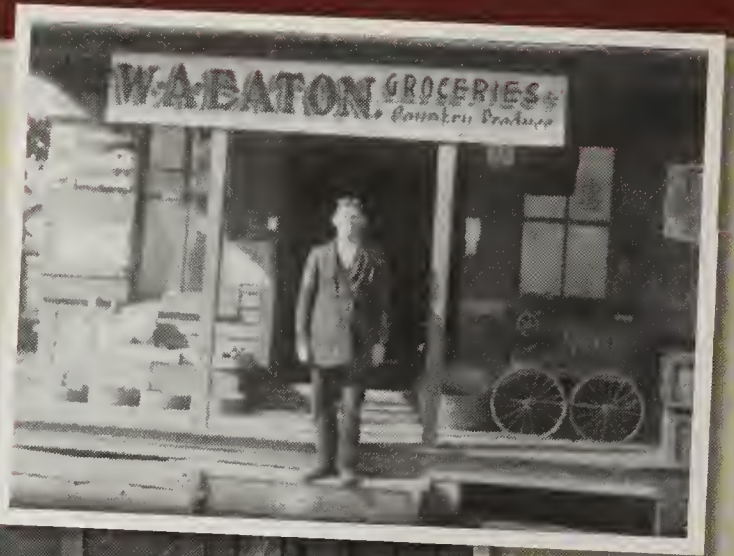
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Imagine examining artifacts in the Smithsonian Institution and finding a never-before-seen sketch for the largest and highest denomination American coin ever proposed? That's just what happened as one coin expert recently explored the collection at this

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THE \$100 UNION™

Original sketches found at the Smithsonian

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George T. Morgan will always be remembered for his most famous coin—the Morgan silver dollar. Until recently, the world knew nothing of Morgan's larger sized and higher denomination \$100 Union concept design. Imagine what these hefty \$100 Unions would be worth if they made their way from Morgan's sketchbook to U.S. coinage!

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Going beyond the Web's surface

The deep Web, also called the invisible Web and the hidden Web, has an aura about it of secrecy and transcendent mystery, conjuring up images of private caches of supremely useful information beyond the reach of mortal Web surfers.

The reality is much more pedestrian.

The deep Web simply consists of information accessible over the Web that isn't accessible through ordinary search tools such as Google and Yahoo.

These search engines can't find it for two main reasons: It's stored within databases and can be retrieved only by using a particular site's search tool. Or it resides at sites that require registration or subscription.

How much information resides below the Web's gleaming surface depends on who you read. One number frequently repeated on the Web is that the deep Web is about 500 times bigger than the surface Web, but this number comes from BrightPlanet Corp. (www.brightplanet.com), a company that sells one of the programs out there for accessing it. Another estimate is that the deep Web is about twice as big.

Deep Web information is usually narrow and specialized. Nuclear Explosions Database (www.ga.gov.au/oracle/nukexp_form.jsp) is typical. A free offering of the Australian government, it lets you search for the location, time, and size of nuclear explosions worldwide since 1945.

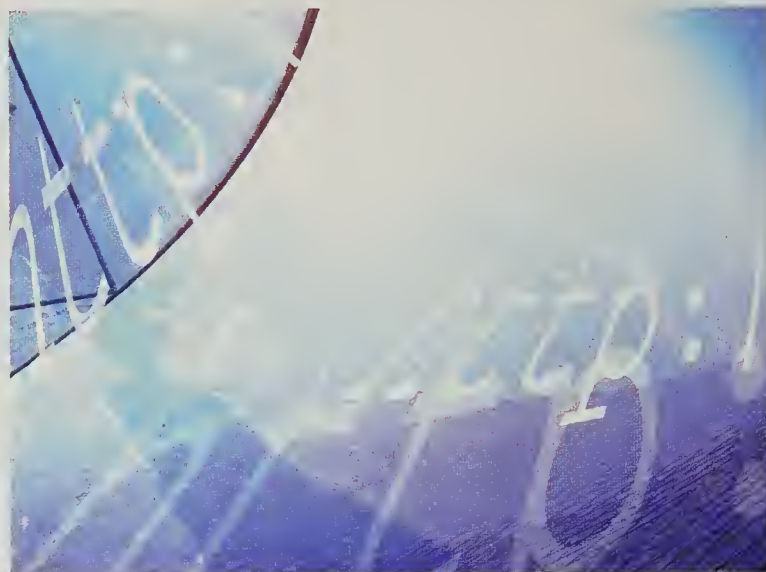
Other examples of deep Web information include data found in professional directories and phone books, laws and patents, items for sale at a Web store or Web auction site such as eBay, archived magazine and newspaper articles, job postings, and stock and bond prices.

Maybe the best way to get a feel for the deep Web and what it can do for you is to manually go to several of the database sites used to store much of its information. Unlike regular Web sites, these database sites create pages on the fly based upon what you search for upon arriving, which is the reason Google and Yahoo can't find this information.

CompletePlanet.com (www.completeplanet.com), from BrightPlanet, is a directory of more than 70,000 searchable databases. You can't search through all of the databases simultaneously, but you can search for appropriate databases and then search through them individually.

Though useful, CompletePlanet.com hasn't been updated since 2004. Much information on the Web about the deep Web is even older, with many links no longer working and sites mentioned no longer existing. This is a common problem in general when using the Web for research. Always check for a "date last updated" notice to help ensure that whatever page you're reading doesn't include old and obsolete information.

Another frequently recommended site for accessing deep Web sites is InfoMine (infomine.ucr.edu), an offering from the



University of California at Riverside, with federal government support. It's maintained by librarians and designed for university-level research. Many of the databases it accesses are fee-based compilations of articles in scholarly journals.

Yahoo is currently testing a tool to let you quickly get at information stored at multiple pay sites. With Yahoo Subscriptions (search.yahoo.com/subscriptions), you can currently search through nine subscription sites, including Consumer Reports, the Wall Street Journal, the New England Journal of Medicine, and LexisNexis. You'll need to have paid a subscription to any given site, however, to fully access its information.


Google has also made strides in helping people access deep Web information.

The information stored in PDF files, created by Adobe Acrobat, used to be considered part of the deep Web, for instance. But ever since Google started indexing such documents, this material has migrated from the deep Web to the surface Web.

One of the more intriguing deep Web tools is Turbo10 (turbo10.com). It lets you search through nearly a thousand deep Web and other sites by typing in a search query once, just as with Google or Yahoo. You can optionally create your own sublist of these sites and search only through them, which can be helpful if you repeatedly do similar types of searches. The brains behind this advertising-supported site are Nigel and Megan Hamilton, a brother and sister team in London.

Much deep Web information resides in U.S. government databases, the U.S. government being the world's largest publisher. FirstGov (www.firstgov.gov) is a searchable portal to such government data as economic forecasts, industry reports, government regulations, and new legislation.

ScienceGov (science.gov), a part of FirstGov, is a searchable portal to scientific papers and technical data generated by 17 U.S. government science organizations within 12 different federal agencies.

Depending on your purposes, accessing the deep Web can be an important part of any given search strategy. 

Reid Goldsborough is a syndicated columnist and author of the book "Straight Talk About the Information Superhighway." He can be reached at reidgold@netaxs.com or <http://members.home.net/reidgold>.

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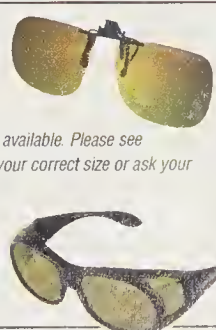
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on your *back porch*.

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**From Elizabeth Love, Winston-Salem**

- ... The sound of music is a pack of hounds running a rabbit or a deer.
- ... You can hunt while sitting on your back porch.
- ... You read Carolina Country magazine every other day.
- ... You walk down a creek bottom to get to church every Sunday.

From Frances Kelly, Hope Mills

- ... You know all the names of your neighbor's dogs but aren't sure of the neighbor's name.
- ... You can still understand the sales clerk's southern drawl, despite her pierced tongue.
- ... Your neighbors know when you need help but otherwise go about their own business.
- ... You share extra rootings from your plants.
- ... To keep cool on a summer's night you hung a wet towel with a clothespin in front of a window fan.
- ... You can open your windows after Christmas.

From Jaron Kennedy, Pink Hill

- ... 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. were Pepsi and Nab time.
- ... You know what up-and-down short rows are.
- ... You chew soybeans to check the moisture.
- ... You know that a cow can kick sideways.

From Mike Davis, Fayetteville

- ... You know who Homer Briarhopper is.
- ... Every Saturday night you watched the Wilburn Brothers, Porter Wagnor and Arthur Smith, right after Championship Wrestling. Then, if you felt like your culture might be slipping, you'd watch Lawrence Welk.
- ... You know you don't need an allotment to grow rabbit tobacco.
- ... You've singed your eyebrows smoking rabbit tobacco because you rolled it in newspaper.
- ... You know a whoppie-jawed door won't close right.
- ... You know what sliding down a plowline out of the hay loft will do to your hands.
- ... You consider hides and knuckles to be gourmet snack food.

From Gerald Miller, Oakland, Md. (formerly of Denton, N.C.)

- ... You spent half your childhood looking for arrowheads in a red dirt field.
- ... You explored the woods dressed like your favorite character in the outdoor drama "Horn in the West."
- ... You spent your summer vacation at the Southeast Old Threshers Reunion.
- ... You had the privilege of going to Washington, D.C., on the Rural Electric Youth Tour.
- ... You still refer to North Carolina as home even though you don't live there anymore.

From Lisa Causby, Nebo

- ... For entertainment, you and your cousins piled into an old junked car and pretended that you were going somewhere.
- ... You sucked on haystraws pretending to be the "high society ladies" in the movies who smoked their long fancy cigarettes.
- ... You closed your windows in the summer because of skunk spray.
- ... You know to be quiet the day after your dad was up all night coon hunting.
- ... You were related to most of your classmates and church members.
- ... Your parents thought that a good cleaning out would cure what ails you.
- ... After Sunday dinner at your Grandma's, you and your cousins would sit on the floor to watch Fred Kirby while the adults cleaned up and gossiped.

From Vivian Nunnery, Elizabethtown

- ... The iceman came twice a week.
- ... You couldn't wait for hens to lay, so you could go to the store and buy candy.
- ... Your mama put a tub of water in the sun so you could have a warm bath before bedtime.
- ... You shelled peanuts so that daddy could have seed for next year.

From Lee Bradshaw, Clinton

- ... When your mother told you to beat your feet off, you cleaned your shoes; and when she told you to wash your face off, you cleaned your face.
- ... You ate potted meat, Vienna sausage and crackers for a snack while fishing at the pond.
- ... At the end of the pepper row you could get a Pepsi and a pack of peanuts.
- ... When Granny said "a cloud was comin' up," you expected a thunderstorm.

From Cindy Newell, Peachland

- ... Tractors slow you down on major highways.
- ... You know what a bird dog is.
- ... You can "bore a hole" or "shake a tater" to make a baby laugh.
- ... Your children prefer corn and beans over hot dogs.
- ... Your son would rather browse the local tractor supply store than a toy store, and all he wants for Christmas is a real moo-cow.

If you know any that we haven't published, send them to:

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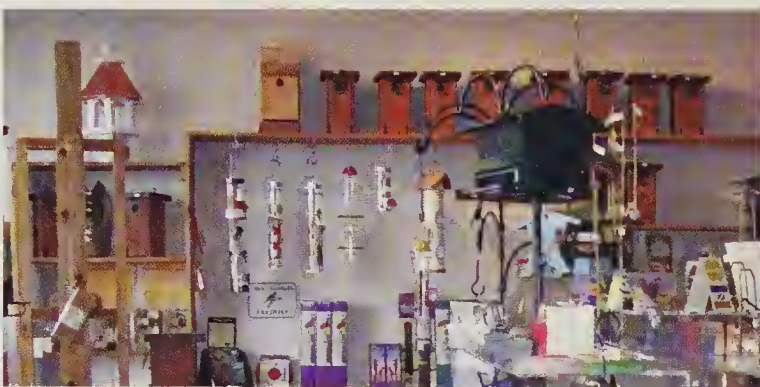
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www.nczoo.org



Humanity stores in Sanford

Habitat for Humanity of the Sanford Area has two interesting retail stores. Both are operated with volunteers and store proceeds are returned to Habitat for Humanity to help build homes for low-income families in Lee County. Habitat Home Store is a resale store and recycling center that receives donations. Items sold include doors, windows, paint, lumber and other construction materials, along with furniture, appliances, dishes and curtains. The store does pickups for items in the Lee County area. Habitat for Birds, located in the Riverbirch Shopping Center, utilizes volunteers to sell items for and about wild birds, including hand-painted birdhouses, coasters, glasses and vases, Audubon books, birdfeeders and food for various birds such as bluebirds, martins, finches and hummingbirds. The store, originally started by a park ranger, also sells squirrel and butterfly food and bat houses.

(919) 774-6767 (Habitat Home Store)
 (919) 775-1371 (Habitat for Birds)
www.wave-net.net/habitat

Unique jewelry

Reva Field of New Bern is a metal and jewelry artist who works with precious metals and authentic gemstones. Concentrating on one-of-kind jewelry, Field has shown her work in galleries in New York's SoHo, North Carolina and in many crafts shows. Her work may be purchased from her collection or by commission. Designs include rings, brooches, necklaces, earrings, key rings and watchbands. Some designs can be worn in a variety of ways, such as the packaged design shown, which sells for \$1,900.

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Help for lost pets

Lassie Come Home is a nonprofit organization that helps people of the Piedmont-Triad area locate their lost pets. The organization, based in Mount Airy, has a Web site with tips for finding a lost pet and how to keep your pet safe, along with a place to report a lost or found pet. Pet ID tags and collars, which can be engraved, are sold on the site. The tags, which include heart, dog bone and fire hydrant designs, cost \$3 to \$5. The collars cost \$10 to \$12.

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You may also personalize your plate with four spaces. **The annual fee for a personalized license plate is \$60—\$30 benefiting the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation and a \$30 personalization fee.** To check the availability of your personalized plate choices, visit ncdot.org/dmv. Personalized tags can be passed to a friend, family member or your next generation.

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Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation

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on the bookshelf

Carolina Comfort II

This sequel to "Carolina Comfort" is a collection of stories about grandchildren, survival from cancer and joyful living for anyone who survives middle age. Stories touch on memories of growing up and coming of age, life aboard a boat, reunion traditions, a family car and other interesting topics. Author Karen Dodd, a native of Carteret County, also wrote "Down East on Nelson Island." Softcover, \$12.95 in bookstores, 156 pages. You can also order a \$14.94 copy, which includes shipping, from Dodd. Send request with check to 6304 Albatross Drive, New Bern, NC, 28560.

(252) 514-2953
dkdodd1@cox.net



Timeless Recipes and Remedies

Author AlexSandra Lett's latest book combines rural ways, old recipes and home remedies with down-home anecdotes about her family and friends. Recipes include "Aunt Gladys's 'Citified Hoecakes,'" "Grandma's River Cornbread" and "Aunt Alice's Chicken Casserole." Chapters include "Dinners Bells and Supper Time," "Ruby Cakes"—A Holiday Tradition," "Fishing, Hunting, Trapping: Fun Ways of Fetching Food" and "Country Cures from the Cupboard." "Timeless Recipes and Remedies: Country Cooking, Customs and Cures" is published by Southern Books & Talks in Sanford. Softcover, 231 pages, \$14.95

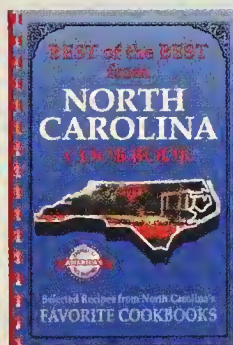
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With more than 400 recipes, this collection compiles favorite recipes from 48 cookbooks from North Carolina. Chapters cover appetizers, soups, salads, vegetables, meats, seafood, pies, cakes, cookies and candies. Included are dishes such as Muddle (a thick fish stew), Lobster-Stuffed Tenderloin of Beef, Stewed Hard Crabs, Dilly Brussels Sprouts, and Homemade Irish Cream, along with desserts such as Sour Cream Chocolate Chip Cake and Cantaloupe Cream Pie. Contributing cookbooks include "The Fearington House Cookbook," "Jarrett House Potpourri," and "A Dash of Down East." "Best of the Best from North Carolina" is part of the Best of the Best State Cookbook Series, and is published by Quail Ridge Press in Brandon, Mo. Softcover, 288 pages, \$16.95.

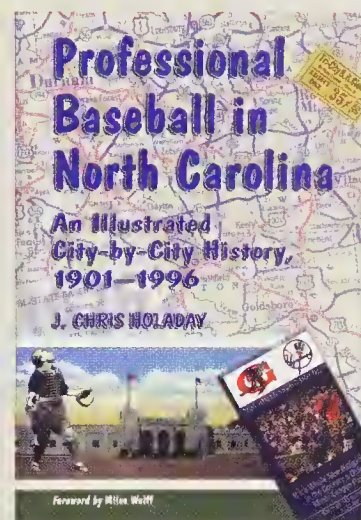
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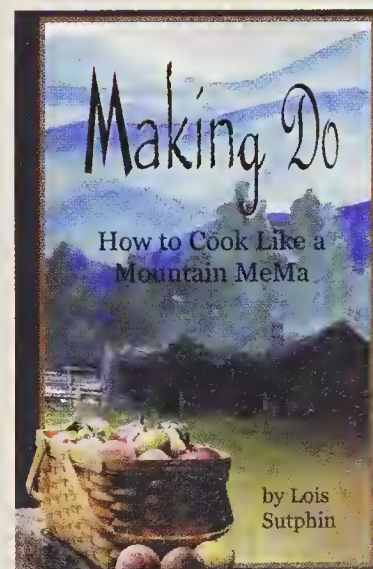
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Cooking like MeMas

Appalachian recipes and authentic stories of mountain living are brought together here in a book inspired by a forgotten way of life. All recipes in this collection of old-timey favorites are made from scratch, from simple dishes like Fried Green Tomatoes to those that take more time such as Molasses and Apple Butter Cake. The recipes are written informally, with headers such as "What ya need" and "What ya do," with chapters titled "Mountain Munchies," "Rise and Shine," "Appetizers and Pickled Picks," "Everyday Supper Fare," and "Mountain Critter Main Dishes." The author, Lois Sutphin, is a mountain MeMa (someone born during the Depression era when making do was the standard in all areas of living) and lives in Greensboro. Other recipes she offers include Fried Possum, Mixed Turnip and Mustard Greens, Salt Lick Surprise, and Blackberry Dumpling. Softcover, 168 pages, \$13.95.

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Say Watt?

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I	I	E	I
N	S	F	N
E	E	F	E
N	I	V	R

Starting with an F and ending with an E, can you spell out the five missing words in this sentence? You can move in any direction—left, right, up, down or diagonally. Use each letter once.

Un, Kay!

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WITHOUT GETTING

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flies like a

Double the numbers above and write your answers in the top boxes above.

Now match the boxes above with the boxes below to find hidden words in your answer.

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May Events



The 250-year-old Yates Mill, centerpiece of Historic Yates Mill County Park, has its grand opening May 20–21. It's on a 574-acre historic site and nature preserve located five miles south of Raleigh. Yates Mill Associates during the past 12 years worked to restore the building. (919) 856-6675 or www.yatesmill.org

MOUNTAINS

Signs of Spring

Saturdays, Rosman
(828) 877-3106
www.headwatersoutfitters.com

Murphy Spring Festival

May 6, Murphy
(828) 837-6821

Discovery at Dusk

May 6, Rosman
(828) 877-3106
www.headwatersoutfitters.com

Rhododendron Show

May 6–7, Asheville
(828) 665-2492
www.ncarboretum.org

Old Wilkes Ghost Tours

May 12, Wilkesboro
(336) 671-3171
www.wilkesheritagemuseum.com

Engine & Tractor Show

May 12–13, Lake Lure
(828) 625-4720

Lake Eden Arts Festival

May 12–14, Black Mountain
(828) 686-8742
www.lakeedenartsfestival.org

Butterfly Festival

May 13, Hudson
(828) 728-8272

Dahlia Tuber Sale

May 13, Asheville
(828) 665-2492
www.ncarboretum.org

Art in the Park

May 13, Blowing Rock
(800) 295-7851

Cruisin' & Jammin'

May 19, Blowing Rock
(800) 295-7851

Southeast Tribes Cultural Art

May 19–20, Cherokee
(800) 438-1601
www.cherokee-nc.com

Ravenscroft

May 19–21, Hayesville
(877) 691-9906
www.licklogplayers.org

Triple Chain-Ring Bike Challenge

May 20, Bryson City
(800) 232-7238

Strawberry Jam Festival

May 20, Bryson City
(828) 488-7889

Montford Arts & Music Festival

May 20, Asheville
(828) 777-1014

Ravenscroft

May 26–28, Hayesville
(877) 691-9906
www.licklogplayers.org

Fiddler's Grove

May 26–28, Union Grove
(828) 478-3735
www.fiddlersgrove.com

Heritage Festival

May 26–29, Bryson City
(800) 867-9246
www.greatsmokies.com

Garden Jubilee

May 27–28, Hendersonville
(800) 693-9708
www.historichendersonville.org

Annual Powwow

May 27–28, Cherokee
(800) 438-1601
www.cherokee-nc.com

Sandburg Music Festival

May 29, Flat Rock
(828) 693-4178
www.nps.gov/carl

PIEDMONT

Durham Farmers' Market

May 1, Durham
(919) 667-0399
www.durhamfarmersmarket.com

Bluegrass & Barbecue

May 6, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Triangle AACA Meet

May 6, Raleigh
(919) 349-5911
<http://local.aaca.org/northcarolina>

Iron Gate Farm Day

May 6, Mebane
(919) 304-9463
www.irongatevineyards.com

Ham & Yam Festival

May 6, Smithfield
(919) 934-0887
www.downtownsmithfield.com

Annual Multicultural Festival

May 6, Lexington
(336) 248-3960
www.lexingtonnc.net

Laurelfest Arts & Crafts Show

May 12–13, Laurel Hill
(910) 462-3102

Antique Tractor & Truck Pull

May 12–13, Oakboro
(704) 485-4906
www.hinsonauction.com

N.C. Folk Arts Festival

May 13, St. Pauls
(910) 865-4179
www.ncfolkartsfest.org

The Art of Craft: 1830

May 13, Charlotte
(704) 335-0325

Patriot's Day at Alamance Battleground

May 13, Burlington
(336) 227-4787

Wake Forest Farmers' Market

May 13, Wake Forest
(919) 556-1579
www.wakeforestmarket.org

Antique Truck Show

May 13, Spencer
(252) 492-6469

"The Estate Lady"

May 15, Monroe
(704) 283-8184
www.union.lib.nc.us

Annual Spring Carnival

May 15–21, Mount Airy
(336) 786-1005

Annual Civil War Tour

May 16–21, Mount Airy
(336) 786-4478

Mayberry Farm Fest

May 19–21, Mount Airy
(336) 786-4511

Antique Power Show

May 19–21, Newton
(828) 241-9424
www.foothillsantique.com

Heritage Day

May 20, Fayetteville
(910) 483-6725

Fun in the Sun

May 20, Franklinton
(919) 494-3662
www.franklintonchamber.org

Blue Ridge Jamboree

May 20, Mount Airy
(800) 286-6193

Yates Mill Park Opening

May 20, Raleigh
(919) 856-6675
www.yatesmill.org

Pond-O-Mania

May 20, Fayetteville
(910) 485-5121
www.fay-moa.org

Art on the Vine

May 20–21, Burlington
www.hawriverwinetrail.com

Garden Tour

May 20–21, Lexington
(336) 242-2091

Taste of Durham Festival

May 27, Durham
(919) 572-6551

The Oak Ridge Boys

May 27, Winston-Salem
(336) 721-1945
www.ncarts.edu/stevens_center

Living History Day

May 27, Huntersville
(704) 875-2312
www.lattaplantation.org

Annual Glory Days

May 29, Fayetteville
(910) 222-3382

COAST**Wooden Boat Show**

April 30–May 6, Beaufort
(252) 728-7317

Barbara Martin & Mac Walter Concert

May 4, Manteo
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

Decorator's Showcase

May 4–7, Edenton
(252) 482-4112

Paul Tardif & Emanuel Gruber

May 5, Oriental
(252) 249-3362

N.C. Folkways & Trade Faire

May 6, Currie
(910) 283-5591

May Play Day

May 6, Edenton
(252) 221-4875

Mark Nizer

May 12, Manteo
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

Hampstead Festival

May 13, Hampstead
(800) 833-2483
www.hampsteadchamber.com

Bloody Mary & the Virgin Queen

May 17, 24 & 31, Manteo
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

Kiwanis SunFest

May 19–21, Surf City
(910) 328-8821
www.topsailcoc.com

Seafood Festival

May 20, Engelhard
(252) 925-3719

Pender County Spring Fest

May 20, Burgaw
(910) 259-2112
www.visitpender.com

"Alice in Wonderland"

May 25–27, Washington
(252) 945-8140

Aurora Fossil Festival

May 27, Aurora
(252) 322-4238

Beach Music Festival

May 28, Manteo
(252) 475-1500
www.darecountyjaycees.com

CAROLINA COUNTRY adventures



Averasboro Civil War Battle Reenactment

Harnett County

(South River EMC territory)



Harnett County's largest town, Dunn (pop. approx. 10,000), has come a long way since its settlement some 110 years ago as a rough 'n' ready logging town. Today it's a transportation convergence with four exits off I-95 and a growing economy grounded in agriculture, manufacturing, distribution and tourism. Points of interest in the area include the Harnett Indian Museum near Angier, with displays that highlight old-time river villages, and the General William C. Lee Airborne Museum in Dunn. Also in Dunn check out Sherry's Bakery, where workers move bags of flour with a forklift and dispense wisdom with hot cinnamon rolls. In Lillington, the scenic county seat on the Cape Fear River, you can stroll downtown and eye picturesque homes. In Angier, browse collectibles at one of the town's antique shops or savor dessert at Sunni Sky's Homemade Ice Cream on Highway 55 South (owner Scott Wilson reportedly gives free samples).

Three top spots:

Raven Rock State Park Nature lovers can refresh their spirits at this 4,667-acre park, about six miles west of Lillington. It offers backpack camping, and canoeists can negotiate rapids of Lanier Falls and the Fish Traps on a portion of the Cape Fear Canoe Trail. Raven Rock Loop Trail travels through a hardwood forest to the park's immense centerpiece, Raven Rock. A stone balcony along the one-mile hike overlooks the river and flood plains. Other trails offer sweet access to fishing holes. (910) 893-4888.

General William C. Lee Celebration Held in Dunn during the first weekend of June, festivities include events for all ages. Sunday's grand finale includes military displays, Airborne Chorus and Band, parachute jump and fireworks. (910) 892-4113.

Averasboro Civil War Battleground Located near Erwin on Highway 82, historic markers detail events of the March 1865 military action, the 1825 plantation home once used as a Confederate hospital and Chicora Cemetery. (910) 892-4113.

Learn of other nearby adventures and events:

(910) 893-7524
www.harnettedc.org

NOW SHOWING

A LISTING OF EXHIBITS

MOUNTAINS

"From the View"

May 22–June 23, Brevard
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(828) 884-2787
www.tcarts.org

PIEDMONT

"Brain: The World Inside Your Head"

Through May 7, Raleigh
N.C. Museum of
Natural Sciences
(919) 733-7450
www.naturalsciences.org

"Secret Games"

Through May 7, Charlotte
Mint Museum of Art
(704) 337-2000
www.mintmuseum.org

Annual River Show

May 12–28, Fayetteville
Cape Fear Regional Theatre
(910) 323-4234
www.cfrrt.org

"The Life & Work of Walter & Dorothy Auman"

May 12–August 26, Seagrove
N.C. Pottery Center
(336) 873-8430
www.ncpotterycenter.com

"Barrier Island Ecology"

Opens May 13, Gastonia
Schiele Museum
(704) 866-6900
www.schielemuseum.org

"Explore the Wild"

Opens May 13, Durham
Museum of Life and Science
(919) 220-5429
www.ncmls.org

"What's Cookin'?"

Opens May 13, High Point
High Point Museum
(336) 885-1859
www.highpointmuseum.org

"Kites to Kitty Hawk"

May 15–July 15, Durham
Museum of Life and Science
(919) 220-5429
www.ncmls.org

"American Roots"

Through May 19, Carrboro
The ArtsCenter
(919) 929-2787
www.artscenterlive.org

Stereotypes:

Confronting Clichés

Through May 20, Charlotte
McColl Center for Visual Arts
(704) 332-5535
www.mccollcenter.org

"Pantry to Pedestal"

The Evolution of
Seagrove Pottery
Through June 4, High Point
(336) 883-3022

Viktor Schreckengost Exhibition

Through June 26, Charlotte
Mint Museum of
Craft & Design
(704) 337-2009
www.mintmuseum.org

COAST

Mollie Fearing

Memorial Art Show

May 1–29, Manteo
Dare County Art Gallery
(252) 475-1500
www.roanokeisland.com

Listing Information

Deadlines:

For July: May 24

For August: June 24

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The Allure of Bamboo

With their exotic, complex textures and colors, bamboos are truly seductive plants. The evidence of many such past romances can be seen in the countryside, where plantings of golden bamboo (*Phyllostachys aurea*) escaped old homesteads. This species spreads by underground rhizomes, often rampantly. Also known as fishing-pole bamboo, *P. aurea* is native to Asia and was reportedly introduced in Alabama in 1882. The common name golden bamboo is a misnomer, as the color of the culms (commonly called canes or stalks) is actually green. It may be confused with North America's only native bamboo, *Arundinaria gigantea*, known as switchcane or canebrake. Our native bamboo is much shorter (6 to 20 feet), while golden bamboo grows 16 to 40 feet. Also, native bamboo has a generally more cylindrical stem.

Bamboos are undeniably beautiful. The culm colors alone—there are greens, blues, yellows, blacks, browns and reds to choose from—can make a gardener drool. But you need to do some research before deciding what kind, if any, to plant, and what you want its purpose to be in your garden or yard. Depending on species, the roots of bamboo grow either in tight clumps (clumping bamboo) or expand laterally via rhizomes (running bamboo). Bamboos from temperate parts of the world are usually running types; clumpers are less cold-hardy. Bamboo is popular as a fast-growing screen or privacy fence—but remember that fences only “make good neighbors” if they’re not muscling into your neighbor’s yard; neither do you want to plant bamboo near sensitive natural habitats. You can adequately contain running bamboo using trenches, con-

crete and/or specialty rhizome barriers (it may also be grown in pots but will require extra care to provide proper moisture and nutrients). Running bamboo has ropy roots that can resemble steel cables—to say you will dig bamboo back in bounds in a few years is not a good plan. You can learn specifics about constructing proper barriers and other bamboo information (growing tips, plant suppliers, crafts, literature) from the American Bamboo Society (www.americanbamboo.org). The society has a Southeast Chapter based in Georgia (e-mail se-chapter@americanbamboo.org).

Sweet Shrubs for Wet Sites

Sweet pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*), and Virginia sweetspire (*Itea virginica*) are two native ornamental shrubs that thrive in wet soils. For several weeks in summer, **sweet pepperbush** bears spicy-sweet flowers on 2- to 6-inch stalks (resembling bottle-brushes). Hardy throughout North Carolina, the upright, oval shrub grows 4 to 8 feet tall and 4 to 6 feet wide. It can tolerate salt spray. ‘Ruby Spice’ and ‘Pink Spires’ are cultivated varieties with pink blossoms. The compact ‘Hummingbird’ grows 3 feet tall and wide. Fall foliage is yellow. Grow sweet pepperbush in sun to partial shade in moist to wet soil. **Virginia sweetspire**, an arching shrub of 3 to 5 feet, bears drooping racemes of lightly fragrant, white flowers in early spring. The variety ‘Henry’s Garnet’ has longer, more arching, 6-inch flower stalks. ‘Little Henry’ remains a compact 2 to 3 feet. Sweetspire has outstanding fall foliage in vivid shades from reddish-orange to scarlet to reddish-purple, depending on variety. It adapts to a range of conditions—from sun to partial shade in dry to wet soils.



Culms of *Phyllostachys nigra* emerge green, then mature to rich ebony.

Touring and Tasting

The time is ripe for hitting the back roads and scenic byways to enjoy the blooming season. For a trip to the mountains, you’ll find a charming tour guide in *Farms, Gardens and Countryside Trails of Western North Carolina*. From the “Quilt Top Ramble” to the “Whistlestop Tour,” you’ll visit orchards, gardens, nurseries, picturesque inns, farm markets, heritage sites and nature trails within a 21-county region. Complete with maps, photos and lively graphics, the 234-page book may be purchased from Handmade in America, P.O. Box 2089, Asheville, NC 28802, (800) 331-4154, www.handmadeinamerica.org

Whether you want to pick your own fruit or locate roadside stands and farmer’s markets throughout the state, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture’s Farm Fresh Web site (www.ncfarmfresh.com) can point you in the right direction. 🍷

Hort Shorts

- The annual *Portulaca* (moss rose), with its fleshy, succulent foliage and brightly hued flowers, faces heat and drought with grace. The similar-looking hardy ice plant (*Delosperma cooperi*), topped with hot-pink flowers, also performs well on dry, sunny slopes.



Carla Burgess can be reached at ncgardenshare@mindspring.com. For more gardening advice, go to the “Carolina Gardens” section of www.carolinacountry.com

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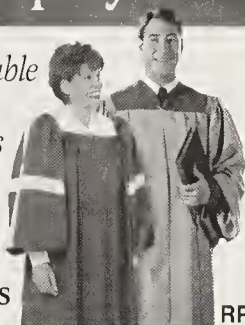
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Hot water dispensers

If you think about it, you will realize how many times you use hot water throughout the day. A hot beverage is only one use. You run hot water over a fresh jar so the top opens easier. You warm up a baby food jar or an ice cream scoop, clean a cheese grate or skillet.

Using hot water from the kitchen faucet wastes both water and energy. Depending upon how far your kitchen faucet is from the water heater, each time you need it, you may have to run more than a gallon of water down the drain until the hot water finally reaches the faucet. This wasted water is replaced by cold incoming water from a water main or well.

After you turn the hot water faucet off, the hot water pipe is still full of hot water. During the winter, this slowly cools off and helps heat your house to some extent so it is not a total loss. (Keep in mind, however, an electric water heater is only about one-third as efficient as a heat pump.)

During the summer, the hot water in the pipe creates a double cost because it is additional heat that your air conditioner must remove from your house.

A hot water dispenser is a tiny tank-type electric water heater that can be located beneath your sink with a spout near the faucet. These dispensers typically have a heavily insulated half-gallon water tank located under the sink. Combining the hot water in the tank with the output of the heating element, it produces enough hot water for about 50 cups per hour. Most have optional built-in water filters. Small countertop models that use bottled water and include a chiller are also available. These countertop models are usually rented from a drinking water company.

Hot water dispensers are convenient to use and easy to install. They have adjustable temperature settings, often from 140 degrees for cleaning and warming tasks to 190 degrees for coffee or tea. There generally is a temperature adjustment knob on the tank unit under the sink. They operate on standard 120-volt house power, so they do not require special wiring.


Whether or not one will save electricity overall depends upon your hot water usage habits. Most hot water dispensers have 700- to 800-watt heating elements. They also operate on a thermostat so the electric heating elements are on only when needed. As with any water heating device, you should set its temperature only as high as you need it. A lower setting requires less electricity to keep the tank warm.

If you do not mind waiting for a microwave oven to heat water each time you want coffee or tea, and if you do not otherwise use much hot water, installing a hot water dispenser will likely increase your utility bills. For example, being a single man who does not drink coffee, I have not installed one in my own home. On the other hand, if you use hot water often from the faucet and heat water on the stove, using a hot water dispenser can lower your utility bills.



A hot water dispenser can provide steaming hot water. The hot water temperature is adjusted with a knob on the tank underneath the sink.

Another time and money-saving advantage of a hot water dispenser is for cooking. Most cooking experts do not recommend using hot water from the faucet for starting rice or other foods. The reason is hot water standing and running through the pipes in a house is more likely than cold water to pick up chemicals or contaminants. Also, the hot water from the faucet is probably only in the 120-degree range.

With the hot water dispenser tank located directly under the sink, picking up contaminants is not a problem because all the plumbing from the tank to the spout is included with the kit. When you plan to steam or boil foods, you can start with 190-degree hot water from the dispenser. This will reduce the stove-top cooking time of many foods and will save energy. 

James Dulley is an engineer and syndicated columnist for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

The following companies offer hot water dispensers:

Anaheim Manufacturing
(800) 854-3229 www.amaheimmfg.com

Elkay
(603) 574-8484 www.elkay.com

Franke
(800) 626-5771 www.frankesd.com

In-Sink-Erator
(800) 558-5700 www.insinkerator.com

Tri Palm International
(800) 646-2747 www.oasiswatercoolers.com

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Shortbread Lemon Bars

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon peel
- 1 teaspoon grated orange peel
- ¾ cup cold butter

Filling

- 4 eggs
- 2 cups sugar
- ⅓ cup lemon juice
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon peel
- 2 teaspoons grated orange peel
- 1 teaspoon baking powder

Topping

- 2 cups (16 ounces) sour cream
- ⅓ cup sugar
- ⅓ teaspoon vanilla extract

In a food processor, combine flour, confectioners' sugar, and lemon and orange peel. Cut in butter until crumbly; process until mixture forms a ball. Pat into a greased 13-by-9-by-2-inch baking pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 12–14 minutes or until set and the edges are lightly browned.

Meanwhile, in a mixing bowl, combine the filling ingredients; mix well. Pour over hot crust. Bake for 14–16 minutes or until set and lightly browned.

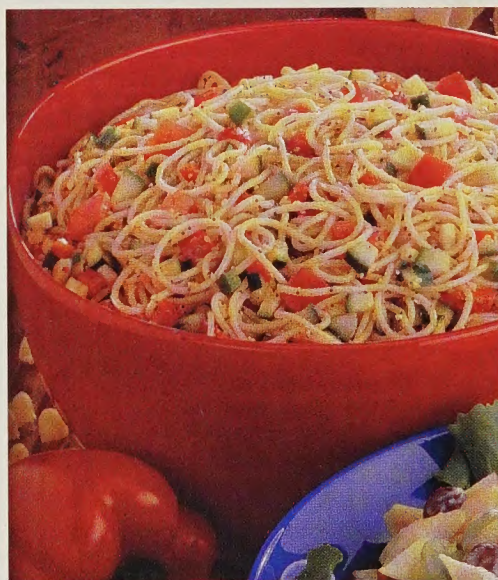
Meanwhile, in a bowl, combine topping ingredients. Spread over filling. Bake 7–9 minutes longer or until topping is set. Cool on a wire rack. Refrigerate overnight. Cut into bars just before serving.

Yield: 3 dozen

Summer Spaghetti Salad

- 1 package (16 ounces) thin spaghetti, broke in half
- 3 medium tomatoes, diced
- 3 small zucchini, diced
- 1 large cucumber, halved, seeded and diced
- 1 medium green pepper, diced
- 1 medium sweet red pepper, diced
- 1 bottle (8 ounces) Italian salad dressing
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 1½ teaspoons sesame seeds
- 1½ teaspoons poppy seeds
- ½ teaspoon paprika
- ¼ teaspoon celery seed
- ⅓ teaspoon garlic powder

Cook spaghetti according to package directions; drain and rinse in cold water. Place in a large bowl; add tomatoes, zucchini, cucumber and peppers.



Combine remaining ingredients; pour over salad and toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

Yield: 16 servings

Winning reader recipe



Strawberry Pudding

- 1 quart sliced strawberries
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 small package strawberry JELL-O
- 2 small packages vanilla instant pudding
- 3 cups milk (to be used for pudding instead of amount on box)
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 large (12-ounce) Cool Whip®
- 1 box vanilla wafers

Heat strawberries, sugar and JELL-O just enough to dissolve JELL-O, stirring constantly. Follow box directions for mixing pudding, but use 3 cups of milk. Add sour cream. Fold in three-fourths Cool Whip. In a 9½-by-13-inch casserole dish, layer wafers, pudding mix, and strawberries. Repeat until all ingredients are used. Top with remaining Cool Whip.

Ann Hudson of Norwood, a member of Pee Dee Electric, will receive \$25 for submitting this recipe.

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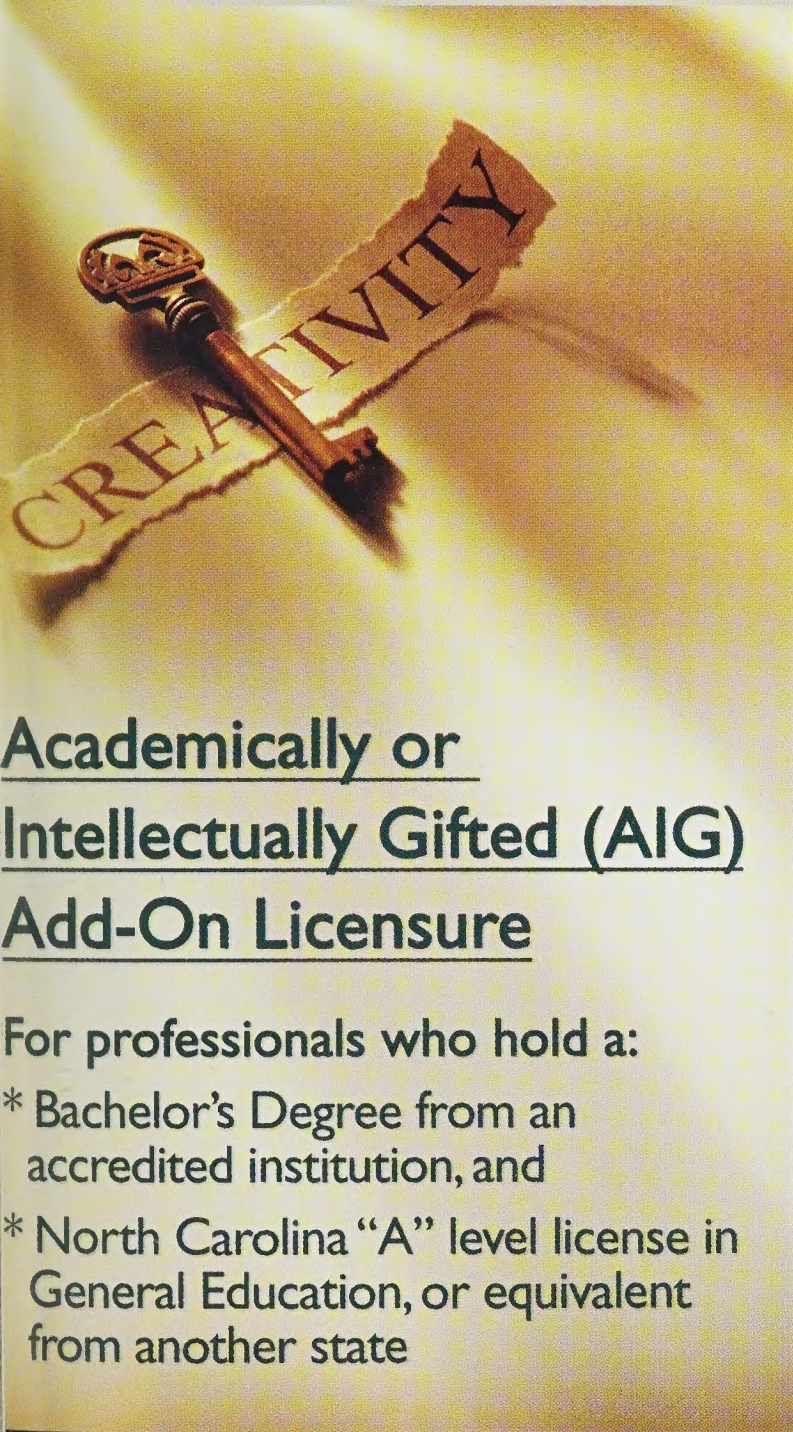


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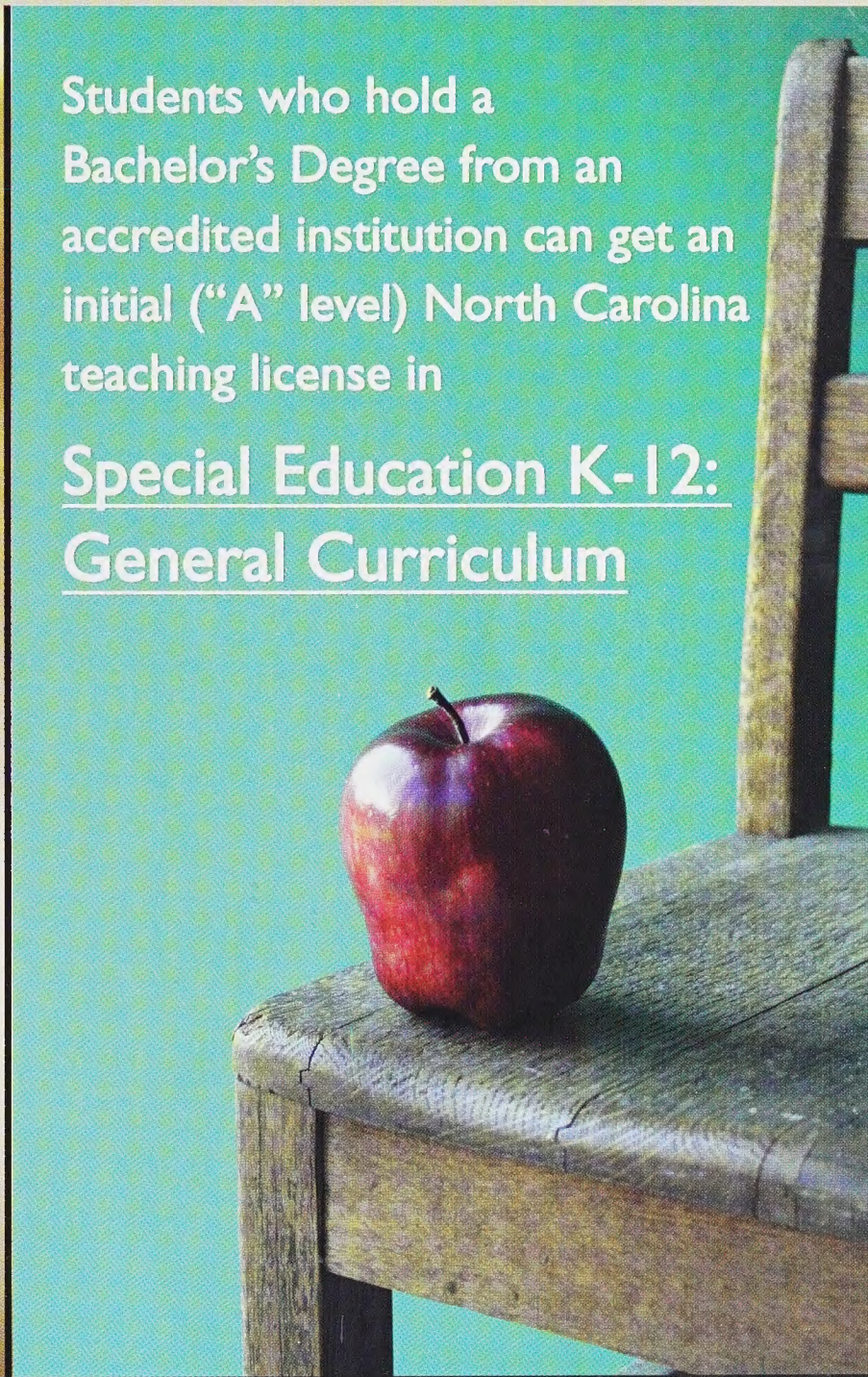
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